

THE
BEST CONTINENTAL
SHORT STORIES
OF 1926

And the
Yearbook of the Continental
Short Story

Edited by
Richard Eaton

THE BEST
CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES
OF 1926
AND THE
YEARBOOK OF THE CONTINENTAL
SHORT STORY

EDITED BY
RICHARD EATON

Editor of "The Best French Short Stories of 1925-26," etc.



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PREFACE

THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF 1926

THE short story is a literary reflection of contemporary civilization. It is not strange therefore that the Continental short story should differ as radically from the American product as the foreign student from one of our own university graduates. The exigencies of Continental civilization do not require a short story which is in reality a condensed novel. Life is not strenuous enough on the Continent to influence the form and character of the short story. Tradition, particularly that of the medieval story-teller, is a far more important factor in the shaping of the Continental short story. As my readers can judge, the Continental short story is, despite certain exceptions, more philosophical and less complete than its American brother. At least, such is its general characteristic, for the Continental short story includes the literary efforts of more than twoscore races, each exerting its own peculiar influence on the literary products of its writers.

Like the city of New York, the Continental short story is an anomaly, the reflection of the traditions and customs of a score of nations. Just as the emigrant from Poland, Albania, or Timbuctoo is influenced from the very day of his arrival by American ideals, so the Continental short story, whether Spanish, Lettish, or Danish, represents the life and culture of the Continent still at the pinnacle of its artistic triumph.

There are, however, upon close analysis, eight distinct racial groups of short story writers, the Latin, Scandinavian, Balkan, Baltic, German, North Slavic, Magyar, and Finnish.

In the case of the German group, comprising Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, there is a closer affinity between the Teutonic short story and that which we know in America. One re-

marks, however, a tendency towards the futurist, the exotic, much as in the case of modern Teutonic art.

In sharp contrast, the North Slavic group, including Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia, is distinctly naturalistic. There is no effort, however, to create the polished and perfectly balanced American short story.

The Latin group, including Spain, Italy, and Portugal, is distinctly nationalistic. The catholicism of Goya, the philosophy of Boccaccio, the supernaturalism of Rossi, are the primary characteristics of the Latin short story.

The Scandinavian *conteurs*, like the novelists, reflect the phlegmatic sophistication of their race.

In the Balkans, one finds the folk-lore of the Middle Ages modernized and converted into something resembling more a local legend than a short story.

The Magyar short story is perhaps the most surprising. One would expect it to be rich in detail and discussion of modern life, much as the Slavic tales. The Hungarians of to-day prefer almost invariably the mystery story based upon a legend as the example in this year's volume. This form of short story has become known throughout European literature as the "Magyar" type.

The task of choosing the "best" short story of 1925-26 in each country is none too easy, for the choice is as wide in the case of certain nations as it is limited in the case of others. I have been guided therefore in my selection, not only by the usual standards of unity, construction, style, interest and completeness of plot, but by a consideration of the customs and intellectual development of each nation.

The Yearbook of the Continental Short Story which represents the bibliography of this volume is necessarily incomplete, since it includes only those works which either one of my assistants or I have read. I should be greatly indebted if the various publishers and editors of magazines whose names are not included in the Yearbook would forward to me in care of the Credit Lyonnais, 19 Boul. des Italiens, Paris, France, copies of their magazines, books, or catalogues, in order that they may be inserted in future volumes.

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THE BEST
CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES
OF 1926

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

By A. AHARONIAN

I

THE ancient gateway leading into the courtyard creaked painfully as it was opened, like an old man annoyed at being disturbed.

A black horse entered first, a queer-looking beast with an up-standing mane on a head too large for its skinny neck. Behind it, walked a dark man of medium height apparently about thirty years of age. Both man and beast looked tired and were covered with dust and sweat.

An old woman sitting on a grassy mound under a mulberry tree raised her head at their approach, and, shading her eyes with her trembling hands, she called to the new-comer:

"Thathoul, dear!"

"Yes, mother, here I am!"

"Blessed be the road by which you came! And how are you, my son?"

"Very well, thank you, mother."

"God be praised!"

And the old woman raised her eyes towards heaven.

The top of the mulberry tree swayed gently in the breeze.

A small boy of three stopped in his unsteady gait across the court, letting his wooden horse fall unheeded to the ground, and gazed across out of big dark eyes fringed with long lashes, then as he recognized his father a smile overspread his face and he trotted across to him as the latter held out his arms, crying:

"Barik, dear little Barik!"

The father picked up his son and kissed him, pressing him close and rubbing his tanned face, wet with perspiration, against the baby's soft fresh cheeks. Gazing hungrily into the child's eyes his father kissed him almost savagely, holding him so tightly

and with such intensity that it seemed as though he would absorb the child into his very being.

"Dear Barik, my little son! Your father loves you with all his heart."

The old grandmother smiled in admiration and happiness.

The horse with lowered head was quietly contemplating this scene out of his large intelligent eyes waiting for the moment when his master should unsaddle him, for he knew very well that he must be patient until Thathoul had satisfied his hungry tenderness.

Tchomar, the big watch-dog chained to the mulberry tree, could not contain himself and barked wildly trying to catch his master's attention, but all in vain—Thathoul was entirely engrossed in his son to the exclusion of all else, and the dog continued to whine unregarded. At last Thathoul went up to him, still holding the child in his arms, and patted his head and muzzle, saying:

"Poor old boy! How you have missed me. It's all right, Tchomar, old thing, you have guarded the house well. Quietly, old man, quietly!"

The child laughed gleefully, and tried to push the animal's head away with his tiny feet.

"Tchomar, Tchomar, quiet now!" repeated Thathoul, moving away, and the dog, happy once more, lay down with his head on his paws.

Thathoul approached the horse, and a shadow darkened his face as he looked into the creature's eyes, for he could not stand the mystery which they seemed to hide—it was something obscure, indefinite, disquieting. Thathoul had often thought of selling the animal to rid himself of this haunting look, but when he actually came to it his idea seemed too absurd.

He took off the sack of tools and placed Barik astride on the saddle. The child, delighted, clapped his hands and laughed and kicked his little legs backwards and forwards, whilst his father took the bridle and led the horse from one end of the court to the other. The horse also knew that this was a ceremony which could not be dispensed with, and, though very tired, he walked submissively along as though saying, "I know, I understand. . . ."

Thathoul lifted Barik down, and, leading the horse to the stable,

fastened him up and gave him some oats, and soon after, with the child on his knees, he was sitting beside his mother on the mound of grass. Barik was playing happily with the pile of fruit which his father had placed before him.

The old woman looked tenderly into Thathoul's eyes.

"How hot you are, my dear! You must just rest quietly."

"Yes, mother, I had pity on my horse and did half the journey on foot."

She took off his hat, and, with the corner of her apron, wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"You stayed a long while away from home this time, Thathoul!"

"Yes, but I have finished my work down there. We shall be going to the quarry next."

Thathoul was a stone-mason, as his father had been before him. While quite young, they had sent him to town to study at school and become a somebody, and he had worked for two or three years at the Armenian provincial school until the unexpected death of his father had caused him to leave. At home he had learnt to cut stones, and, as he loved this work he apprenticed himself to one of the well-known masons in the town, later returning to the village where his mother was anxiously awaiting him.

From that time forth it was he who restored the churches, the old convents and the village steeples of the neighborhood. It was he who carved the calvaries and chiseled the tombstones. Absent sometimes from home for days or weeks together, he would reappear and stay for a short time with his loved ones before leaving again for some other village or the mountain quarry not far distant. This time he had been absent a couple of weeks working on a village steeple.

"Thathoul!"

"What is it, mother?"

But the old woman said no more. It was evident that she had something on her mind but feared to sadden her son by giving expression to it. They listened to Barik's shouts as he played with his horse. The dog snapped his teeth together after a vain effort to catch a teasing fly which was buzzing round his head. A crowd of merry sparrows fought and twittered in the tree.

They squabbled for a few minutes and then flew off to other leafy shelters.

It was the mother who broke the silence.

"Thathoul, dear, I am afraid I may die soon and leave this baby alone. . . ."

Her voice trembled and broke, she could not continue and put up her hand to her eyes which had filled with tears.

"What an absurd idea, mother! Of course not. We shall both live to see Barik married and dance at his wedding, so put this crazy idea out of your head."

He quite understood the fear which troubled his mother, but he thought it best to make light of the matter.

"I wish you would marry," she went on sadly but more firmly. "Think! I am old and worn, and one day I shall go out suddenly like the flame of a candle. . . . Then who is going to look after the house and little Barik?"

It was true that his mother was aging every day, her stooping form showed it; but though Thathoul acknowledged this fact he refused to stop and consider it seriously.

It was not the first time that she had tried by means of gentle hints and pleasantries to urge him to marry again instead of living all his life in the shadow of the past, but she had never shown herself quite so determined as now.

Thathoul remained pensive.

A second wife!

Who could replace the charming creature who had irrevocably carried the young man's heart with her into the tomb? Whom would Barik call mother?

"I wish I could, mother. I'd like to make my life over again myself. But it is simply impossible. You see this leaf?"—and he held out a dead leaf to her—"even God cannot put it back on the branch and make it green again."

"But next spring a new leaf will grow and take its place. One goes and the other comes. This is the will of Nature."

"Ah, mother! Khechiche-Ogly¹ is wiser than we are.

"J'ai planté un jardin avec mille et une peines,
Le traître y touchât et mes fleurs se sont fanées."

¹ A popular poet.

"These are the words of a wise and intelligent man. But a cruel fate tore up my flowers and I have not the courage to replant my garden. I only want to live long enough to see Barik married and happy."

"Oh, you must marry again, my son, for even though loved ones die we who are left must continue to make the best of life. I implore you to marry, your loneliness cannot be pleasing even in the sight of God. Three years of mourning is long enough, and the pain of your wound must be assuaged."

Thathoul did not reply, but the line between his eyes grew deeper and a dark cloud seemed to settle on his brow.

"You know," continued his mother, who was wiping her eyes, visibly overcome, "I want to see you married before laying my old bones in the grave and closing my eyes for ever. The door of heaven will not always be closed against me. If only some good woman could take the place of our dear Marane I should be able to die in peace. But do as you think best, my child; I shan't worry you about it again."

The night was falling. The last rays of light were playing on the roofs and hay-stacks, the cattle coming up from the fields lowed as they moved slowly through the lanes and the soft chimes of the church clock floated out over the tired village.

The mother rose and went into the house to prepare supper, leaving her son sitting motionless, gazing far away into space, his thoughts on those words of hers—"You must marry again, my son!"

Very soon his mind held no image but that of his lost wife, his beloved Marane. How many times had he not seen her thus in dreams! He had looked amongst his friends and acquaintances in vain to find her equal; she was always his peerless Marane with the fascinating beauty spot on her right cheek, her long black eyelashes and her graceful figure like a tall slim tree. Oh, and her face, her walk, her hair . . . she was like a mountain deer! How could he ever forget her?

Thathoul went back to his sad dreams of the past.

He recalled his love for Marane, the love which for a year had excited the curiosity, astonishment and jealousy of the village. Never had there been such headlong, passionate, overwhelming love as theirs. People had shaken their heads and

said they should not marry—no good could come of it; but to all objections the young couple had replied simply: "We love each other, and we are going to get married!" . . . And this wonderful love of theirs had opened and blossomed like a flower, triumphing eventually over all obstacles, even melting by its ardor the ice in jealous hearts.

And now Marane, Thathoul's joyous Marane, who by her beauty and charm had captivated all the village, was gone. She had smiled her gay way through life with her adoring husband for one short year, then her baby had come, and in bringing him into the world she passed out of it leaving her soul looking out of his eyes and carrying with her to the grave her husband's griefstricken heart. "Alas, who can count on happiness in this cruel world? Man is born to suffer. . . ." And the old people shook their heads sadly.

The universal sorrow was too deep for words when Death took this exquisite, dearly loved creature. As for Thathoul himself, he almost went mad under the terrible blow. It was not only his wife but part of himself that they buried that day in the cold earth. He followed the coffin unconscious of everything, his mind a blank, his eyes fixed on the distance, walking without knowing why or where. . . . But when, by the side of the open grave, they gave him a clod of earth to throw in he suddenly came to life as though branded with a red-hot iron, and with a terrible cry, inhuman in its anguish, he flung the earth on his own head and collapsed onto the mound of damp earth. They carried him home unconscious, and he was ill for a long, long time.

When at last he was able to get up he would sit for days at a time silent and motionless under the tree in the courtyard, tracing patterns in the sand with his stick; and at night he would go and throw himself down on Marane's grave, sobbing hopelessly.

The villagers said: "He has gone out of his mind; it is like Leily and Mejloum."²

But he did not lose his reason. Barik saved him.

The old grandmother devoted herself to the little orphan, and

² *Leily and Mejloum*: a popular Persian poem whose heroine is Leily.

it was due to her untiring efforts that he had grown into a strong healthy boy. At three he was a beautiful child with dark curly hair and the same wonderful eyes as his mother. . . .

"You must get married, my son!"

"Oh, mother! What have you said? What have you done?"

Darkness was descending on the plain, blotting out all things. The top of the mulberry tree swayed gently in the breeze.

II

At daybreak Thathoul took his horse from the stable and, mounting him rode off towards the mountain. His mother, who had put up a parcel of food for him, watched him making his preparations for departure; she noticed the vertical line between his eyes and avoided looking at him direct.

"No, mother, certainly not," Thathoul said as he left the house.

"Why are you saying 'No'?" she demanded.

"To what you were proposing yesterday."

She sighed. Her son was still suffering from the emotion evoked by her words last evening. He had tossed about all night, his mind tormented by the past, and his fitful sleep had been disturbed by dreams of what he had lost. This morning he was troubled and restless and only too glad to get away to his work—his refuge at times like this.

Silently his mother watched him until the distance hid him from sight, then sadly shaking her head she went back to her daily tasks.

The whole length of the road, many colored and shining, was full of the light and mist and scents of early morning.

Thathoul thrust his cap to the back of his head and drew in deep breaths of the perfumed air. The words of the familiar song, so frequently on the lips of the girls as they came and went to their work in the fields, returned to his mind. How often had Marane swum into his sight in this ocean of light and shade, tiny pearls of dew beading the dark tendrils of her hair and her cheeks aglow in the sunlight! How many times he had waylaid her there—like a deer in search of his mate!

And he began to sing their old song:

“Je suis la joyeuse Marane de Thathoul!”

But the familiar words brought a bitter smile to his lips, and he whipped on his horse. The creature jumped, shook his heavy head, and then settled down again to his slow monotonous pace.

Suddenly Thathoul's heart filled with pity for his beast submitting so patiently to his dreary lot, and he patted the scrawny neck and the short stiff mane.

“Poor old thing! What do those mournful eyes of yours see?”

But the horse did not understand, and continued his slow even way.

The road was long; it stretched endlessly through the fields, like a snake coil on coil; far ahead, where the orchards ended could be seen a group of girls wending their way to the cotton plantations. Behind them, nearer Thathoul, a woman was walking alone, sometimes bathed in the sunlight and at others lost in the shade.

Thathoul recognized her.

It was Sona, of the Maroug family, a young widow. Her husband had fallen a victim to the gun of a brigand two years ago, and since then Sona had gone back to live with her parents. She was a dark woman of medium height, with a round healthy face, rosy cheeks and bright blue eyes. She walked without glancing to right or left as though eager to overtake the group in front. Thathoul looked at her critically: “She is taking very small steps, how can she expect to catch up with the others?” And he smiled to himself for his idle speculations. His eyes ran over the well-set shoulders and the two thick braids of glossy hair swinging rhythmically with the movement of her body as she walked. Suddenly the woman stopped and bent down to take off her left shoe, which she shook and then put on again. “A stone, surely!” said Thathoul, and again laughed at himself for making the reflection. . . . He had often seen Sona on this same road and passed her without remark; but to-day he looked at her with a special curiosity—after the conversation with his mother. However, he assured himself that he was as indifferent to her as ever, and to prove it he tried to imagine her taking Marane's place;

the cruel irony of the idea revolted him, and again he murmured:

"No, mother, no!"

But he continued to ride slowly, taking in the fine generous curves of the woman's figure which revealed themselves under the faded cotton dress, and the braids of shining hair that fluttered mockingly before him. Against his will he was conscious of an attraction, and he began to feel angry and irritated with himself.

"Impudent hussy!" he muttered between his teeth; but he could not explain why he called her that seeing that he knew nothing of her thoughts as she went quietly to her work.

Pulling his hat well down, he spurred on his mount and approached her. At the sound of the horse's hoofs the woman looked round, and for a fleeting instant the light from her blue eyes flashed into Thathoul's causing some cord deep down in him to thrill in response. He was conscious of it, and, almost angrily so as to hide his emotion he called:

"Good morning, Sona!"

"Good morning, master!"

A touch of surprise was evident in her reply.

Letting his reins fall on his horse's neck Thathoul rode on lost in reverie. The calm beauty of all around soothed his storm-tossed soul.

"Good morning, master."

He looked up. Without realizing it, he had reached the quarry where his comrade, Gaspard, was awaiting him.

"Good morning, Gaspard; so you have got here before me!"

"It is you who are late to-day."

"Yes, I know I'm late," the other replied absently, and, remembering what had delayed him, the line between his eyes deepened, and he became taciturn.

Gaspard looked at him without saying a word; he knew his master.

He was a big strong fellow of about thirty, this Gaspard, wild and uncouth, a real son of the mountains. His large head was set so firmly on his short thick neck that, like a wolf, he was obliged to turn half round in order to see behind him. The shape of his head, which came to a point at the top and widened out

at the sides, together with his low stubborn brow gave at first sight a disagreeable, almost sinister, impression, but this was offset immediately by the candid expression of his eyes—he had a way of looking at things with one eye almost closed whilst the other appeared to be laughing. His broad face disappeared in a tangled mass of dark hair and beard leaving as landmarks the nose with its wide nostrils and the thick lower lip, always dry and cracked, in summer by the sun and in winter by the winds. His broad back, a trifle bowed, seemed made to carry heavy burdens and his powerful arms to break the hardest stones.

For some years now he had devoted himself exclusively to Thathoul's service, and for him life had no other meaning than to carry out his master's orders. He pronounced the word "master" with so much veneration that it seemed the expression of something holy and mysterious. The feelings that united him to his master went deeper than those ever inspired by respect and admiration. He followed his master's example blindly in everything, rejoiced and was sad with him, worked or rested according to his will, and was supremely happy in the knowledge that he loved without any hope of receiving a similar affection in return. The two worked together as though they were one: Thathoul supplied the brains and Gaspard the physical force and energy. They were a marvelous complement to one another. Gaspard had neither intelligence nor opinions of his own, and whenever he did pronounce an opinion on any matter he always added immediately, "My master said so," and as far as he was concerned anything that fell from his master's lips was like a message from heaven.

When it was a question of breaking a rock in pieces by constant hammering, moving an enormous stone from one place to another or opening up new beds of marble, these were all matters for Gaspard; but after that, when it was a case of chiseling beautiful forms and flowers on these same blocks with delicate skillful manipulation, then it was the master's turn. Gaspard looked upon his own share of the work as quite stupid: "It is the work of an ox, master, even a wild one could do it!" And he laughed, showing his splendid teeth. All the rest was the master's work—in his eyes wonderful and incomprehensible. When Thathoul, silent and inspired, was bending over some piece of polished stone

and, by his skill of eye and hand, giving life to the inanimate stone, Gaspard would leave his work and sit for hours in a corner near his master lost in rapturous admiration as he watched the strokes of the chisel, at first sight meaningless, gradually harmonize into a beautiful design under his master's skillful touch.

"Oh! I could die for you and your clever hands, master," he cried, marveling, his lower lip pendulous and his right eye wide open in astonishment whilst the left was tightly shut.

At such times he was ready to knock down mountains, or descend precipices—anything—in order to tear the most beautiful stones from the bowels of the earth for his master to work on.

Under his rough and uncouth exterior he hid a tender sensitive soul. Not only did he understand and share in Thathoul's creative joy as an artist, but he also shared his moods of gayety and sorrow like a brother.

There were times when hidden away all alone Gaspard could cry like a child.

In silence he had borne his part of Thathoul's overwhelming grief; and, even now, years after, when he saw his master's face more somber than usual he was always specially considerate and forbearing in manner so that he might not add in any way to the bitterness of this sad heart. In all his efforts to please he was apt to be a little extravagant and grotesque, and Thathoul, who noticed this, could not help making fun of him in spite of himself.

Gaspard had remarked that something was wrong to-day. Instead of settling down to work as usual Thathoul seated himself on a rock and, with his arms clasped round his knees, gazed at the distant mountains whistling softly.

Gaspard knew this was a bad sign and was wondering what he could do when Thathoul said suddenly:

"Gaspard, we must get you married; what do you think about it?"

"Oh! Ha, ha! Master . . . Master . . . oh!" And Gaspard's great shoulders heaved with laughter so that he could hardly speak.

"You are getting on, Gaspard, you ought to marry," continued Thathoul, looking at him smilingly.

"Take a wife! . . . Whatever for? . . . Ha, ha, ha . . . For her to watch over the fireside? . . . Oh! Ha, ha . . ."

"Yes, she will watch over the fireside and give you children."

"Children. . . Ha, ha! Children and a wife . . . oh, master! Show me the woman! There is no woman would take me!" And he looked so pitiful as he made this confession that Thathoul had to burst out laughing again.

"No woman? There is Sona Maroug for you!"

"Buxom Sona? . . . Why, only the other day she slapped me on the back and made fun of me . . . She would never have me. Ah, master, she would marry you more readily . . . but, no . . . better not. . . She laughs too much, and besides she brings bad luck. She loses those who come near her. . . She is a devourer of men. Her first sweetheart died, and the next man, her husband, ah . . . !"

Thathoul became silent again; the smile left his face and his eyes wandered to the mountains.

The two men walking side by side without exchanging a word set out for home, the horse laden with their tools.

The road between the orchards was full of movement and life. The shepherds were bringing home their flocks, and the young girls in happy groups on their way back from the fields were laughing and singing.

The prevailing gayety communicated itself to the two comrades.

"Which do you prefer, Gaspard?" asked Thathoul.

"Ha ha, master, you know better than I."

"Look at Saquane's daughter, what long hair she has. What do you think of her?"

"Hello! There's Sona! Ha, ha! . . ."

In fact Sona was there too. Thathoul ceased joking and his face grew sullen as he looked at her, with her bare legs, undoing her plaits. Then he quickened his pace.

That night he slept worse than the previous night. Sometimes he had a picture of himself back at work in the quarry, he saw his stone and he was busy making fresh designs for it. Then Sona would rise up before him with her two plaits dancing on her back, the little curls at the ends mocking, coquettish. He was furious with himself and Sona who had crossed his path

twice that day and seemed to have come out on purpose to cast a spell on him. He made a piteous effort to call up Marane's image from the mists of the past, but it was a phantom thing of the dawn.

Barik was sleeping by his side, and he turned and kissed him tenderly. Somewhere in the depths of his being a barrier seemed to crumble and great sobs tore him. He could not stop. . . .

"Thathoul, Thathoul dear! I would rather be blind than see you suffer so. . . ."

It was his mother who, watching over her unhappy son with maternal solicitude, had heard his troubled breathing and strangled sobs in the darkness.

Thathoul grew calmer, but for a long time his deep sighs mingled with the old woman's prayers in the shadows.

III

Barik had reached the age of five when one after another several events occurred which completely changed his little world.

First of all his father shaved his beard—a thing he had never done since the death of his wife—and which altered him altogether. Then a strange woman, Sona Maroug, appeared in the home, and his grandmother told him he must call her "mother." In the third place, and for Barik this was by far the most serious, a few months after the first two events his dear grandmother took to her bed and after a few days' illness passed quietly away.

Each of these incidents had its own influence on the child's destiny and made its impression on his young mind. His father's shaven face struck him as very funny. For several days he never missed a chance of pulling his mustache and asking him what had happened to his beard. His father told him that the mice had nibbled it when he was asleep in the night, to which the child replied:

"I'll kill the mice."

But after a time he got used to this change in his father's looks—for the new face was just as full of tenderness and charm for him as the other had been.

But the problem of the unknown woman was another matter altogether. His dear little grandmother had carefully explained

to him that she was his mother who had come back from a long journey, but Barik remembered perfectly well that the last time he went to the cemetery there had been a beautiful sculptured monument which his father had leaned against and with tears in his eyes had told him:

"Your mother lies there."

And he remembered too that his grandmother had seemed vexed with her son for talking like this.

Then after all, his mother had not been very far away, he thought, if she just came out from under the stone. He wanted to go to the cemetery and see for himself if the stone had been moved, otherwise how could she have come back?

"Grandma, when shall we go to the cemetery?" he had asked once.

"Why, what for?"

"To go and see Mother."

The old woman shook her head, and silently looked across at her daughter-in-law. Their eyes met, the old woman's beseeching and those of the younger enigmatical.

No one vouchsafed an answer to the child, who suffered through the misunderstanding without arriving at any explanation of the mystery.

Nor was that his only trouble.

Barik did not like his new mother, she frightened him.

Sona realized this, and, though she was quick tempered and had anything but a sweet disposition, she forced herself to show the child some affection. But it was in vain: Barik avoided her more than ever, and every time his candid gaze encountered her large eyes, in whose depths he felt something unfathomable and threatening, a little shiver of fear ran through him, and he turned quickly away.

A hidden animosity grew up between the woman and the child, —the one spiteful and treacherous but experienced in the art of concealing her designs; the other frightened and defenseless with only the candid instincts of his childish soul to guide him. The cold dislike which Sona had first felt towards her husband's little son gradually crystallized into an unquenchable hatred as she realized that in his eyes his bewitching mother lived again. It

was her mother-in-law who all unwittingly told her this one day when she was praising the child's looks. Sona understood then why Thathoul so often kissed his son's eyes and gazed so long and lovingly into their depths. A spiteful jealousy grew up in her until she could no longer regard the child with indifference. He represented her rival—not dead but living and powerful—this child who, from morning to night, came and went about the house, and all unconsciously he recalled the image of his mother to his adoring father.

Barik felt this hatred creeping towards him, but as long as his grandmother lived it did not matter much; he ran away from Sona and hid himself safely in the kind old woman's ample skirts. And at night with his little hands caressing her shriveled breast he would go to sleep trying not to think of the new mother who frightened him and whose presence in the house he could not understand.

Sona could not do anything with the child, and what annoyed her more was the fact that she could not give vent to her aversion. She felt obliged to dissimulate and appear affectionate, playing the part of a loving and devoted mother to the child whose death she would have regarded as a blessing.

This concealed malevolence was a great grief to the older woman, and she tried tactfully several times to show Sona how wrong her conduct was and "how displeasing in the sight of God and man," as she expressed it.

But in vain, for this was a matter of the feelings; and in hatred as in love, the laws of the heart are unfathomable and as wild and free as the wind. Sona never replied except by a look, cold and implacable.

So when his grandmother died with this pain in her heart she left Barik doubly orphaned.

Thathoul had foreseen his mother's death, and it was on that account that he had given way to her entreaties and married again. Why Sona rather than another? "Oh, what did it matter who it was since Marane was no longer there?" he asked himself.

On her deathbed his mother took his hands in hers:

"I leave Barik in your care, my son. . . . Your wife? . . . how do I know . . ."

"Mother, it was you who told me . . ."

"Yes, my son, I did ask you to . . . but she is always a second wife . . . she is not the mother of your son! . . ."

She had other things to say, but they remained hidden in her heart. She did not want to admit that she was dying heart-broken by the pain and disappointment her daughter-in-law caused her. She did not want to tell Thathoul that in the evenings when he was away from home Sona stood at the door smiling and laughing at the young men as they went by, especially the town-clerk who looked at her in a very compromising way. She did not wish to expose the fact that the newcomer disliked Barik, whose little life might be made very unhappy, nor that even her own gray hairs had not protected her from insults from her daughter-in-law. She passed it all over in silence and carried her trouble with her to the grave.

From that time Thathoul lived under a cloud of depression. Life and its unforeseen events swept him along like a frail barque on a mighty current; he ceased to struggle, but he did not cease to think, and though he worked very hard he took to drinking. His wife gave him no happiness or consolation; he had only the material satisfaction of feeling that there was some one at the house to look after Barik. As far as he himself was concerned, he felt that life was over.

"The world is a window,
The newcomer, arriving, glances in and passes on."

He often repeated this wise old proverb.

"Gaspard, old friend, does it take long to pass the window?"

"No, not long."

Barik, who did not understand what was going on around him, retired within himself. After his grandmother's death he was indeed an orphan and had no refuge from the hate he read in Sona's eyes and the danger which he felt lurking near. He was like a hunted deer, not knowing where to turn for help or refuge, when he was left to the tender mercies of his stepmother. As far as possible he used to escape out of doors and play with other children like himself, ragged and barefooted, and would go half starved all day rather than return to the house before

night. Sona never asked him where he had been or why he was late; and if by any chance he did stay at home he would spend all his time beside old Tchomar, petting and playing with him, or he would climb the mulberry tree and throw down leaves for the dog to catch in his mouth.

Several times he begged his father to take him with him, no matter where. But his father, who little realized all that was going on in his child's mind, left him at home desolate and unhappy under the malevolent watchfulness of his stepmother's blue eyes.

He grew thin and pale, and his ardent sensitive little soul tormented itself. He was filled with a vague presentiment of some great catastrophe which daily drew nearer and nearer.

The memory of his joyous childhood vanished away like a mist, and unhappiness was born and took its place. . . .

One evening as he was coming home in the dusk he noticed a man standing by Sona in a dark corner of the courtyard; he was small and thin and wore a long coat, a white fur cap and high boots and his sword was sheathed in a silver scabbard. Wondering who this could be the child stood still to look, whereupon the man disappeared as nimbly as a cat, and the dog, barking excitedly, dragged at his chain as he tried vainly to follow him. Sona went into the house, but Barik, instead of following her, went to quiet the dog, wondering all the time what this stranger was doing in their courtyard talking to his mother. The little man, who vanished like a shadow, left behind him a subtle terror, and the child shook, seized by a dread of he knew not what. The house, the court, alike smothered him . . . he felt he must run away and leave them for ever, but where could he go to? . . . And supposing this unknown man returned to-night? . . . "He will come back, he will come back . . ." he kept on thinking to himself; and though he could not imagine why, he felt it was for something evil.

From the doorstep Sona's voice called him:

"Barik, Barik, aren't you hungry? Come in to supper."

"No, mother, I don't want any."

Sona went in again. Her voice had been unusually gentle, and it was the first time she had troubled to come and call him to supper.

That night Barik awoke several times, disturbed and unhappy. He saw his mother coming in and out and heard Tchomar barking furiously.

The next day she was very kind and affectionate and gave him nuts and raisins and other good things to eat, telling him at the same time that he must not tell his father about "that man" he had seen here.

"You understand, Barik? If you don't say anything I will give you some more sweets. You must not say a word; if you do something dreadful will happen."

"I won't tell, mother."

"You mustn't say a word to anybody, not even to the children you play with."

"I won't say anything, mother."

"Listen, I'll ask your father to buy some beautiful cloth, and I'll make you a new suit."

"Yes, mother."

"That's a good boy, Barik."

"Yes, mother," he replied mechanically.

Barik did not breathe a word to his father or any one else. It was not because his stepmother had given him sweets and promised him a present but because, when she told him to keep it a secret, she had warned him that if he did not something dreadful would happen. He shuddered again as he recalled the cold steely look in her eyes—had he not always been silent about everything in his unhappy little life for fear of those cruel eyes?

As a consequence, "that man" continued his visits, always stealthily late at night; and when Barik knew it he trembled, cowering down amongst his bed-clothes without uttering a word.

His father came home and went away again, but Barik said nothing. He had become very silent, and when Thathoul was at home he would sit for hours by his side, hardly responding to his father's caresses, though he longed to go away with him from this house where there was no one in whom he could confide. He was afraid of everything, the house, Sona and the shadows in the night, but most of all of "that man" who reappeared each time his father went away for a few days.

Those dreadful nights! How he suffered. . . . He felt as though the darkness might burst into flames and devour him.

He had to bite his lips to keep from crying out. This terrible secret that his cruel stepmother had bound him to keep tormented him ceaselessly, until he felt he could bear it no longer and determined that at any price he would go away next time with his father: he would throw himself in front of the horse, cling to his father's feet, beg and beseech him to let him accompany him, anything—but go he must and would. Having made up his mind he waited, thinking of nothing else, for the day of his father's departure.

When the latter was on the point of leaving Barik ran on ahead and barred his way.

"Father, oh, father! Take me with you!" He implored, holding out his hands as though he were drowning.

"But I can't do that, we are going a long way and won't be back for a week! What would you do with us? When I go to the quarry I'll take you with me, I promise."

"Father dear, take me now! I can walk, and I'll look after the horse."

"No, it's impossible. Don't be tiresome. Stay at home and wait for me; you'll see what I'll bring you back!"

"Father! Oh, father!"

But his father had gone already. . . . He began to cry, then suddenly rushed after the retreating form . . . but it was no use.

He retraced his steps, and, sinking down by the courtyard wall, he buried his head in his hands and sobbed bitterly.

Never had he felt so utterly alone.

Sona came up and, sitting down by his side, did her best to soothe him, stroking his hair and murmuring words of comfort. He raised his head, but when his eyes encountered her blue ones he leapt to his feet and dashed to the gateway, disappearing down the road.

Tchomar whined after him pitifully.

And the top of the mulberry tree swayed gently in the breeze.

IV

Sarhade, the blind musician, with his wrinkled face upturned to the sky, struck a few melancholy chords on his guitar. Not a

muscle moved on his cold set face. He played as though for the sky at which he looked and whence he drew his inspiration. At the corners of his mouth, like channels worn in the face of a rock, were the lines of a set smile. He smiled when his instrument wailed as he smiled when the world laughed light-heartedly over some fleeting joy.

"Help yourselves to the wine, for the love of God!" cried Thathoul to his guests, who included several of his comrades as well as the priest and the town-clerk.

They were celebrating Barik's birthday.

"Here's many happy returns of the day! Drink, I beg you," Thathoul cried.

This was a great occasion, celebrated every year by a party, at which they all got drunk.

Gaspard as usual was there to do the waiting for his master.

Barik in a new suit with his hair well-brushed and his face very clean was sitting beside his father.

He took no notice of the jokes and laughter going on around him; Sarhade's music and his father's kisses alike left him unmoved. All his attention was centered on the little thin dark man with the wiry mustache who sat blinking his foxy eyes.

Who was he? Barik could not say, but he felt exactly the same repulsion for him as he had for the mysterious shadow who, in his father's absence, came to see Sona secretly, and about whom he had been told never to speak. Months had passed and he had remained silent. "Yet," thought the child, "he is not dressed like 'that man' who always wore an overcoat and carried a sword, and this one is in ordinary black clothes."

The man was sitting next to Barik, and every now and again the child would glance furtively at him out of his eye-corners, but when he saw the pointed mustache and yellow face he drew back against his father, trying to shut out of sight this other neighbor.

"Look at this boy, Martin-begh," said Thathoul, addressing "that man." "Look at his eyes, beautiful eyes—eh? How many can you find to equal them in the village? Wait and see what he grows into. . . . I'd die for him!"

And Thathoul kissed his son tenderly. Martin-begh smiled without replying, and made a movement as though to stroke

the child's hair, but Barik stiffened and threw himself back against his father.

"Gaspard, bring us more wine!"

Gaspard seemed preoccupied. There was an anxious cloud on his brow, and his movements were clumsier than usual; he had even let one or two plates and glasses fall, amidst general laughter. He reddened and fled away, only to reappear a few minutes later still more nervous and confused. He looked at no one, unless it was the town-clerk, behind whose chair he placed himself from time to time with a look on his face as though he would like to murder him.

"Give us a toast, reverend father!" cried Thathoul.

"Here's to Barik's health, my son; with God's blessing we shall celebrate his wedding one of these days."

"Ah, it is not the mouth of an ordinary man but sainted lips which speak thus! Dear and reverend father, you are a true Armenian."

Thathoul kissed Barik and emptied his glass at a gulp.

"For the love of God, fill up your glasses," he entreated, whereupon the glasses rapidly emptied themselves.

In the warm acrid air Sarhade's raucous old voice rose above their heads accompanying the wailing notes of the violin.

"Thathoul, your very good health, my son," continued the priest, "and that of your dear wife. May you both live to a ripe old age and have many children!"

Thathoul raised his glass, for a moment his head drooped as sad memories crowded his mind, then looking at his wife, he said:

"Your health, wife! Marane, my dear Marane! . . ."

Sona turned crimson and hung her head.

As for Gaspard, he could not believe his ears. This was the first time he had ever heard his master call his second wife by that name. Immediately after their marriage his mother had begged and prayed him to call his second wife by the name of the first; as was the custom. She had said:

"She is taking her place, my son. You must look upon her as returned from the grave. It is one of God's laws."

But Thathoul, who from the depths of his heart was bitterly aware of his irrevocable loss, had said: "Marane! Where then

are her eyes and lips and the beauty spot on her cheek? Where is that slim graceful figure and the neck like a slender column? . . . Mother, if God had wanted her to stay He would never have snatched her from us. No, this is Sona, not Marane."

Gaspard knew all this, and yet here was his master calling her Marane before all his guests!

"Drink, good brother!" said Thathoul to him suddenly. "You see that I am safe and sound."

Gaspard understood the allusion; he recalled the phrase he had used himself: "devourer of men." The glass trembled in his fingers, and as he stood he looked first at Sona, then at Thathoul and then at the town-clerk. But he didn't drink. He could not drink to the health of this Marane. He had already heard ugly rumors as to the relations existing between her and the town-clerk, which had shocked his simple naïve soul. Why had Thathoul called this hussy by the name of Marane? He could not bear to connect that name of blessed memory with this dark secret which troubled his heart, and he did not know what to do.

"Come on, drink, Gaspard, be a man! . . ."

Gaspard grew pale, his lips trembled and his face twitched like a child about to cry. A storm was raging in his heart. Something terrible seemed to be on the tip of his tongue; he was ready to give vent to some awful cry, to fight or to throw his glass in some one's face or smash a skull.

"Master . . . Master . . . but . . ."

He could say no more. It seemed to him as though everybody in the room, except Thathoul himself, must know that this Marane was no more a true wife to Thathoul than to this repulsive man who sat leering at her as he held his glass towards her. They were all laughing and drinking, making fun of it as he thought. Oh, they were wicked! And just to look at them sitting there wounded him to the depths of his loyal soul. How could he drink?

"Drink, Gaspard, drink; there's a good fellow!" said Thathoul as he lent over to Martin-begh and whispered something in his ear at which they both laughed noisily.

Gaspard saw it all—his master had said he was drunk, and the laughter cut his heart like a knife. His eyelids with their

thick fringe of lashes opened and shut spasmodically, his jaws contracted, and between anger and pain something seemed to snap in his brain, as with a sound that was neither laugh nor cry but a compound of all the emotions, he dashed his glass to the floor, where it broke into a hundred fragments, and fled from the room.

A foolish laugh echoed round the room; they all thought he must be drunk.

"Gaspard's health! Here's to Gaspard's health!" was heard on all sides.

The glasses were quickly emptied, but Gaspard heard no more. He was sobbing out his grief in a dark corner of the courtyard. It was the first time his master had distressed him by allowing this man to enter his house and calling Sona by Marane's name in his presence.

But he soon found excuses for his master. He knew nothing about it; it was only he, Gaspard, who was aware of the insult to his comrade's honor. Oh! this horrible secret which was eating like a canker into his heart. . . . What could he do? What could he do? . . . He ought to kill some one, but whom?

Night fell and the feasting still continued; by this time they were all more or less drunk—some laughing and stamping and others weeping foolishly.

Sona retired into the little room which led out of the living room. Something in Gaspard's attitude had disquieted her and she was filled with apprehension. Instinct warned her that there was something behind it all connected with herself; and of all those present, she alone realized that Gaspard was not drunk.

She decided to go and look for him and so solve the puzzle that was tormenting her. He was not to be found in the house so she went out into the courtyard where she looked cautiously round, calling his name in a low voice.

He had thrown himself down in an obscure corner by the wall, where his form showed only as a darker mass among the shadows as he lay on the ground with his head buried in his arms.

"Gaspard, what are you doing there?"

But there was no answer.

From the house came the sound of voices raised in laughter and dispute, whilst Sarhade, the blind minstrel, was singing as he played:

"J'ai planté un verger avec mille et une peines;
La main du traître y a touché, et mes fleurs se sont fanées. . . ."

Then they heard Thathoul's voice:

"God bless you, master Sarhade! Sing that again, will you?"

Going close to the wall, Sona asked:

"Gaspard, why are you crying here?"

But still he made no reply.

Then again they heard the musician's voice:

"Je suis une pauvre caille et toi un méchant faucon
Tes griffes m'ont touchée, et mes plumes s'en sont allées. . . ."

Followed by Thathoul:

"Oh, sing it again, Master Sarhade, heart of my heart. . . ."

Softly Sona placed her hand on Gaspard's shoulder and bent over him. He lifted his head, and if the night had not been so dark she would have been able to read the suffering on his tortured face, for his eyes were full of a desperate grief in which a wild prayer struggled for utterance. He lifted the young woman's hand from his shoulder and held it in his own, which was burning.

"Have pity on my master, oh, my sister! If there is a God above why has Thathoul been drinking so much lately? Oh, my sister . . . the honor of the family . . ."

He was sobbing and beseeching her in a torrent of incoherent words, and Sona, despite the darkness, could see the canker at his heart. She saw it and trembled, searching for words which would not come, for she wanted to deny everything and scatter his suspicions.

"But . . . there is a man . . . it is a question of honor . . . blood. . . ."

There was something more Gaspard wanted to say, something he could not put into words—something that choked him. . . .

Sona was breathing hard in the darkness and her hand in

Gaspard's trembled with the nervous fever that ran through her veins. Suddenly she dragged her hand away and, throwing herself back against the wall, panted in accents of suppressed fury:

"I won't have him call me Marane! I won't have it; I'm not a corpse. I know why he called me that . . . and I am still a thorn in the eyes of his son! . . ."

That very night, in a moment of mad passion, Thathoul, as though in a dream, murmured in his wife's ear:

"Marane, Marane darling . . ."

And his lips sought the beauty spot he loved so well. Then realizing his mistake—and beside himself with chagrin and disappointment—he savagely bit the cheek where he had hoped to find it. Sona screamed and, pushing him back with a violent blow on the chest, she cried:

"Your Marane is in the cemetery! She torments me from the grave—may she be cursed for ever and ever!"

Never had Sona shown her jealous hatred so openly. Every word burned with rancor against the dead whose presence haunted her day and night. All the suppressed animosity of months burst forth like a torrent of vitriol in Thathoul's face.

Shaken by the blow Sona had just dealt him and by her words which exposed the real nature of her feelings, he sat up and rubbed his eyes, pulling himself together.

What happened next was as appalling as it was unexpected.

The nightmare cleared from Thathoul's mind, and the dinner and the guests, Sarhade, the musician, and Gaspard all passed giddily before his mental gaze; then it was Marane whom he saw profaned by this woman lying at his side, whose lips spat out foul-mouthed abuse. But why this hatred? Whence rose this jealous fury? An icy shudder ran through him and instantly he stretched out his arms towards the firm throat, angry lights dancing in his eyes and his teeth gritted together. His hot panting breath burned the face of the woman towards whom he bent. . . . She realized her deadly peril and, springing from the bed, fled across the room, where she crouched in a corner by the wall.

"Father, father, I'm frightened. . . ."

The noise of the quarrel had awakened Barik.

Slowly Thathoul lowered his head and his arms fell to his sides.

"Curse you, you devil," he muttered, and went over to the child. . . .

At the window dawn was just peeping in.

V

"This child can't see any more," said Thathoul's wife to him as he crossed the threshold one evening.

"What's that you say? What?"

"I said that the child does not see any more at all now," she replied sharply.

The man stood on the doorstep as though turned to stone. The sudden cruelty of the words filled him with horror. His first instinct was to throw himself upon Sona and beat her, to shake her to pieces, but with an effort he mastered himself, and though he felt himself trembling he remained outwardly calm and with his brows drawn threateningly together, he asked:

"And you, bird of ill omen, do you see as well as ever?"

He wounded her purposely by the animosity hidden behind his words, for he well knew that Barik was a thorn in her eyes; only recently they had quarreled about him and many bitter words had been exchanged.

The child, sitting by the fireside with his eyes bandaged, listened silently to what was going on near by. Ten days before something had gone wrong with his eyes, a bitter kind of liquid matter had exuded from them, flowing down his cheeks like tears, and the child had suffered agonies. His father, unable to do anything to alleviate the pain, went nearly mad as he watched his little son's suffering. They had tried every remedy in vain. Slowly the terrible malady had crept to the eyeballs themselves and destroyed the fibers of the eyes, causing the most excruciating pain, and day and night the distracted father had knelt by the side of the little sufferer muttering prayers or, with arms crossed, had paced like a caged animal up and down the court under the silent stars, which twinkled peacefully—indifferent to the suffering on earth.

The last two days the burning pain had eased little by little, and then suddenly stopped altogether. Barik's eyes were still closed but the smarting and burning had ceased. Somewhat re-

assured, Thathoul began to come and go as far as the marketplace and around the house and fields; once more he could laugh and joke, and then, this evening as he came in with his mind at peace, his wife greeted him with the words: "This child cannot see any more . . ." and then, callously indifferent to what she had just said and its effect on her husband, she sat down in the window and bent over her sewing without showing any trace of emotion.

Thathoul went up to his son and, gently and carefully removing the bandage, stood there speechless—for the appearance of the eyes was perfectly normal. The only unusual sign was the size of the pupils which were dilated to such an extent that they occupied almost the whole of the iris. The wide-open eyes looking upwards did not flinch when the father put his hand just in front of them and then drew it quickly away. Two or three times he held his finger close up to the child's eyes, but the eyelids did not move; Barik saw nothing. The delicate brown lashes which had played such a part in Thathoul's tender dreams and memories fluttered no more; they remained as a dark fringe surrounding two dead lakes lost for ever in endless night which would never again lighten and darken in response to their quick movements.

It was not only the loss of Barik's sight; his eyes had sheltered Marane's soul, and now that too was irrevocably lost in the cruel shadows.

No one spoke.

Outside the shaky old gate of the courtyard creaked monotonously on its rusty hinges in the autumn wind, it seemed to be groaning and whimpering as if in acknowledgment of the calamity to which it had given right of way. Under the pile of mattresses in the corner the metallic chirp of a late and solitary grasshopper could be heard, and outside from the branches of the mulberry tree came the harsh discordant notes of a magpie.

But Thathoul heard nothing. With one arm round him he was gazing into his son's eyes with passionate intensity, as though he would rekindle their extinguished light by the flame from his own and burn away the heavy cloud of night which veiled these beloved eyes.

Gaspard suddenly appeared.

"Hello, master, what wonderful good fortune! The child is better! . . ." he cried, seeing Barik sitting so quietly with wide open eyes.

"Oh, be silent!" cried Thathoul, throwing up his arms in a gesture of hopeless abandon.

Distressed and astonished, Gaspard stood transfixed in the doorway, and then, almost guiltily, he crept quietly inside and stood looking round unhappily.

A deathlike silence fell on them.

Thathoul, after a few thoughtful moments, rose and went back towards the wall.

"Barik, where am I, my child?"

"There, father."

And he pointed with his finger to the direction whence the voice came.

Thathoul's lips ceased to tremble so painfully and his breathing became easier, something almost like a smile appeared on his face; he even glanced over at his wife as though to reproach her for making an ill-timed jest. "Perhaps," he said to himself, "it is only things close to that Barik can't see," and he gave him another test:

"What am I holding in my hand, Barik?"

In his hand? . . . The child searched his mind for something probable.

"You are holding your stick in your hand, father."

"Barik, Barik, what are you saying? Oh, this is awful!"

With his back to the wall Thathoul slid to the floor letting his head fall heavily forward on to his knees.

The child realized that he had said the wrong thing. He felt his father's suffering and was ready to take all the blame upon himself. His lips trembled and he struggled against his own misery in order to console his father.

"Father dear, I shall see . . . father, I . . . I shall see soon. . . ."

"Yes, yes, of course you will, my dearest," replied Thathoul in a tone that he endeavored to make reassuring. "Tell me, Gaspard, where is it written that a child of eight may become suddenly blind. . . ? Do you know? I have cut the stones for a dozen churches, I have sculptured a hundred Calvaries, but I

will destroy them all, dost Thou hear, O God!" he continued, looking up at the sky. "I will pull them down, I will set fire to Thy temples! . . ."

But Gaspard was listening no longer; like a shadow he had fled unobserved.

The child, worn out, lay down and went to sleep. Thathoul tucked him in tenderly and then went out himself.

VI

For two whole days no one saw Gaspard, and Thathoul was at a loss to account for his sudden disappearance.

At night, however, he returned, tired and dusty, leaning heavily on a stout stick. He stopped in the middle of the room.

"Look what I have brought you," he said pantingly, and held up two little papers folded into squares. "The priest told me that this one must be burnt and the ashes mixed with water which Barik must drink, and the other must be sewn in his clothes."

He was out of breath, his broad chest rising and falling rapidly, and with his sleeve he wiped the beads of perspiration from his brow. He was smiling happily, confident that he had done the right thing; and with perfect faith in the remedy, he sat down in his usual place waiting to see Barik's eyes regain their sight under the miraculous treatment.

He had made a whole day's journey on foot in order to visit a learned and celebrated priest, and hastened back without any rest.

Thathoul took hope again; like a drowning man, terrified at the dark depths, he made desperate efforts to hold on to his fate. Hopeless, with all his energy sapped away by the terrible isolation in which he found himself, he was ready to go to any lengths, to believe in anything that might bring back the gift of sight to his child. He was waiting for a miracle. . . . Why should it not lie in the bits of paper that his good Gaspard held out to him?

He took them, and, burning one, he mixed it with water and gave it to the child to drink, the other he sewed on Barik's sleeve and then gazed anxiously at his eyes. Gaspard, with one eye half

shut and the other wide open, watched the performance with intense feeling.

But Barik did not see any better.

After that they sought advice from all the clever and experienced men that could be suggested; not a beggar or a traveler passed without being asked if he knew of a remedy.

One advised rubbing the eyelids with the fat of a hedge-hog, which Thathoul immediately did; another said they must skin a dog alive and place its body, warm and bleeding, on the patient's head: this he carried out as well as many other treatments of the same kind which in the remote parts of the country are considered to have miraculous curative properties. Sometimes they were savage and mysterious, often repulsive and cruel and always foolish and without any effect.

Poor little Barik continued to be blind.

But Thathoul did not give in; he was tenaciously confident that a cure must be found.

The calamity was so overwhelming, so colossally foolish, that he could not bring himself to submit to such a blow at the hands of fate. He tried to find some solid rock of understanding to cling to in his bewilderment, but he found nothing and became more and more perplexed as to why this disaster had happened specially to him. He awaited a miracle.

After all, all that he held dear on earth, all that he lived and toiled for lay in the eyes of his child, behind those long silky lashes, in those dreamy eyes, deep as the sea.

In those eyes, like limpid pools, the lovely spirit of Marane lived again entwined with how many happy memories and precious dreams. They were a shrine consecrated to the dead. Who then dare so insolently and profanely put out the candles of this shrine? It was impossible. . . .

It was not like one of life's ordinary misfortunes; this was something as fantastic as it was terrible—for which one could not even find a name. That was why, when everything else failed, Thathoul turned once more to God to ask Him why his child had become blind: what could God want to do with those two pure beams of light?

But instead of God it was the wind that answered as it swept shrieking over the roads, whirling clouds of dust in the face of

heaven. Sadness brooded over all, touching with its breath serpents and doves, flowers and dancing butterflies. . . .

But in spite of all Thathoul prayed unceasingly.

"Hear me, O Lord, for the sweat of my brow rises to Thee from the roof of Thy temple stronger than the smoke of incense! From these arches my soul has suffered and cried unto Thee more than all the prayers of the poor and needy! How many sleepless nights have I spent devising some new and exquisite form in which to express in stone Thy glory and holiness! Lord, it is thus that I have built and decorated Thy temple, and I beseech Thee not to destroy the temple of my heart. Oh, grant that Barik may recover his sight! . . . I have never willingly caused suffering, never crushed even an ant or destroyed the nest of a wild bee, nor has my hammer crushed the head of a scorpion. Why has the hammer of Thy vengeance fallen so heavily upon me, O Lord? Oh, give back the light of his eyes to my son! . . ."

He wept, but when he rose from his knees to leave the church he was comforted and filled with hope.

During the winter Gaspard accompanied Thathoul on pilgrimages to all the famous shrines, both far and near, where they besought the aid of the saints.

But all in vain. The saints did not come to the help of Thathoul, and God seemed very far away. . . .

Barik remained incurably blind.

For him, life, moving and colorful, with its many varied scenes, ceased abruptly like a wheel with a broken axle. Light and smiles, flowers and country, the village and its people, the lambs playing in the sunshine, were all suddenly fixed, but obscuring their beauty a heavy cloud descended, dark and stormy in places and in others pale like the mists of twilight.

Sometimes when it was more than he could bear Barik would slip quietly away and, with the help of his little stick, find his way to old Sarhade.

These visits were always made by stealth for his father, who would never admit that Barik might remain blind, did not want his son to become a strolling musician.

The fact that they were both blind, however, drew the child instinctively to the old man. For him too little by little the

world and life in general became a succession of sounds flooding over his spirit in waves—gay or sad or terrifying. Wonderful scenes unrolled themselves before him as he listened to Sarhade's music. He understood it, and the notes dropped like dew on his parched soul, which had been left so desolate. He never tired of listening to the master's songs, and afterwards as he sang them to himself little by little the soul of a poet developed within him.

Sarhade touched the strings of his instrument with such intensity of feeling that at times they seemed to weep, then, suddenly full of animation, they would relate some of the mysteries of that unknown enchanted region where the dance of sound dwells eternally, and which is known only to the blind.

Barik's world, sometimes plaintive and sad, sometimes wild and gay, awoke to life under these notes.

It seemed to Barik that if only he took the guitar and touched the cords he could make it speak as did the master. . . .

"Barik, my child, what are you crying for?"

"I want to play like you, master!"

In Barik's soul raged a storm of tormented sound.

"Don't cry, my poor child, you will play like me," said the old man, stroking Barik's thin little hand, and, drawing the boy into his arms, he kissed him as though he were his own son. . . .

"Don't cry any more, little chap. Let the rest of the world weep. You and I . . . you and I. . . . Ah! we are different!"

VII

Late one night Barik woke up suddenly.

It was at the beginning of winter, and outside a furious wind rattled the doors as though to force its way in, shrieked through the crannies and tore the last shriveled leaves from the trees. Tchomar was barking continuously to add to the tumult.

Thathoul was not at home; he had been away several days. Barik did not know where.

The child felt himself forgotten, thrown to the mercy of this terrible wind which sometimes moaned plaintively and sometimes roared as though it would take the roof off.

He felt as though close by in the corner where Sona was sleep-

ing some one was talking under his breath. Could it be the wind?

However, as the noise of the storm lessened he heard very distinctly a slight continuous sound sometimes like the rustle of a serpent, sometimes like the whispered sound of kisses.

Filled with dread, Barik forgot the wind and listened to this confused sound. He went hot and cold with fear, and then buried his head under the clothes so as not to hear the noise any more. It was more than a noise; it seemed like a terrifying black shape, each moment growing bigger and bigger, rushing upon him. . . .

"Mother, where are you?"

No reply . . . But "that thing" kept on creeping. . . . Barik hid under the clothes again; the murmur stopped, but the wind beat furiously at the doors and the dog barked wildly. . . .

He was stifling under the clothes, and putting his head out cautiously, he drew in deep breaths of air and wiped the moisture from his brow.

Again! . . . This time he recognized Sona's voice pitched very low; she said something quickly which he could not catch, followed by a sigh and the sound of kisses.

"Mother, are you alone? Is it you speaking? . . ."

She made no reply, and he lay in his corner shivering with fear, hiding his head in the clothes, only raising them now and again to draw a deep breath. He was oppressed by the feeling of evil abroad in the air. Never had he felt his blindness such a handicap.

He bit his lips to keep from crying out. In the darkness, so clearly and distinctly, he could see the steely blue of Sona's treacherous eyes, and by her side that mysterious shadow which he had seen sometimes in the evening creeping along the wall of the courtyard and about whom Sona had told him never to speak.

Never since he lost his sight, and life with all its color and motion became for him just a series of sounds, had he passed such a dreadful night. The room seemed to be crowded with men who were kissing his step-mother, mocking at his infirmity and insulting his father, whilst he, his son, must remain silent for ever—because of the steely light in his step-mother's eyes. . . .

Again that wave of hot suffocating air . . . followed by the sound of kissing. . . .

Instinct awoke in Barik. He matured rapidly in that impure atmosphere, and his terror gave place to disgust. No, he would be silent no longer. It was "that man" who was kissing Sona . . . he must speak. His heart was filled with grief and rage. Why did this man come when his father was away? Instinct told him that there in the darkness was something evil, something of which his father was ignorant but which would cause a cataclysm when he became aware of it.

Well, what matter if it did! He would be silent no longer. There they were kissing again. . . .

"Mamma, mamma! Answer me. . . . I'm not asleep, I can hear you talking."

But still she did not reply.

Barik's voice was dry and sharp. His blindness, the night with its evil whispers and all the horror that he had lived through had aged him all at once and loosed in his soul a fierce storm of grief and hate.

He longed to be able to see and to be big and strong like Gaspard, then with a heavy club in his hand he would have rushed to the corner and made mincemeat of "that man's" head in one blow.

An impossible wish!

Still, he could pray . . . and with all the fervor of his innocent soul he prayed that his father and Gaspard might come—then he would tell them all.

But they did not come. . . . The only sound was the voices whispering and outside the wind blowing through the leafless branches of the mulberry tree.

Barik sat up in bed and by groping round he found his clothes and dressed himself; then he took his stick and went out into the courtyard.

It was very cold, for the first snow of winter was falling lightly and the icy wind went through his little body.

Where could he go to in the middle of the night? Where fly to with those sightless eyes so as to get away from the sound of those hateful kisses, which seemed to reëcho in the sounds all around?

Where could he go to? He was asking himself this question as he shivered in the snow storm under the bitter wind, leaning his head on his stick in despair. He wanted to cry, to shout loud enough to arouse the village and make his father hear wherever he might be.

Where could he be? . . . Somewhere too far away; and he himself felt so weak and helpless out there alone in the snow.

Tchomar barked ceaselessly. He had recognized Barik in the darkness and he was calling him, begging him to come to him. Barik obeyed.

Tchomar was always chained up at night now. Why was that?

He petted and caressed the dog, rubbing his own face against the animal's; they were both orphans and deserted and they understood one another.

He undid the chain. The dog jumped about in wild excitement and delight, ran round the court, rubbing against the walls and finally came back to his little master's feet. Then off he went again with his nose to the ground following the scent until he came to the door of the house where he crouched waiting, his ears pricked.

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Barik was sitting on the bank under the mulberry tree, and as the wind shook the branches little clots of snow fell down on him. He sat quite still, his head on his hands, weeping bitterly.

Presently there was the sound of the door creaking as some one opened it cautiously.

Barik heard it and raised his head to listen.

It was not until later, however, that he learned what happened. . . . At the time Tchomar's fierce barking was all he could distinguish, at first a threatening growl becoming more and more enraged. In the darkness it seemed as though the dog was worrying some one, trying to spring at his throat and tear him to pieces, whilst his victim shouted and screamed as he tried to defend himself against the powerful fangs of the furious beast.

Barik guessed what it was—Tchomar was strangling "that man."

Then there were shrieks from Sona as she tried in vain first to call and then to beat off Tchomar. The dog seemed determined to put an end to the existence of this man for whose blood he had thirsted for months and on whose account he had been

chained up at night. The more Sona tried to drive him off the more furious he became, getting his teeth in the man's body and tearing away the flesh.

The man was groaning and the dog was just about to finish him when a shot was heard, followed by a second and a third, and Tchomar released his prey as he fell mortally wounded with a bullet wound through his chest. He had just strength to drag himself to Barik's feet to die.

Two night-guardians knocked at the door. There was the sound of frightened voices, the moans of the injured man as he was carried away and a few suppressed sniggers. Then all was still again.

Barik, still in the snow under the mulberry tree, shivered with cold—and something else too. . . . He had not foreseen all that. Everything was confused, his head was swimming, he hardly knew where he was. Then suddenly footsteps sounded quite close and some one stopped in front of him all out of breath. It was Sona. In a voice hoarse with rage she demanded: "Was it you who unfastened Tchomar?" The steadiness and decision of his "yes" only enraged her further.

"Why did you unchain him, son of a dog?"

But he made no reply. Grating her teeth she bent over Barik till her feverish breath burned his forehead and he could see in imagination the flame of hate in her eyes, but he did not draw back; and when two hands twined round his neck like serpents he did not cry out or try to defend himself.

Life was too hard and difficult, he felt he had had enough.

The woman, whose shame would to-morrow be the talk and jest of the village, wanted to strangle the child. She only loosed her hold to beat him, and then seized him again as though she would break every bone in his body.

"Why did you unfasten him, son of a dog?"

The child could only pant, moaning a little. Her hands never loosed their vicelike grip and he made no effort to free himself. Mad with rage she bit and scratched him, at last hurling him from her with a parting kick. He lurched heavily against the mulberry tree and muttered just once "Father!" as he fell unconscious on the corpse of the dog.

When he came to himself it was impossible at first to remember what had happened. Why was he out here in the cold wind and snow? Where was his father? Why did his head feel as heavy as lead? He groped around him and his hands encountered the dog's heavy coat.

"Tchomar! Tchomar!" he called in a feeble voice.

The dog did not move. . . . Then the child remembered. . . . He put his hand to his head and felt clots of blood in his hair and on his forehead; he touched his head and chest; there was blood everywhere.

He did not cry; he felt no pain, only an overwhelming sense of weakness and fatigue. He found his stick and got up falteringly, then asked himself what he could do and where he could go.

He guessed it must still be night as there were no sounds except now and then the crowing of a cock, and then the soft chimes of the church clock.

Day was breaking and the wind had dropped.

Then he remembered old Sarhade. He reached the gate and with trembling steps set out.

VIII

Next day Thathoul returned to find his home completely destroyed. His wife had disappeared, his dog was dead and his child had taken refuge with Sarhade.

An evil flood, carrying before it the honor of his devastated home and his reputation as an honorable and upright man, had spread through the village, making his name a byword and blazoning abroad his shame.

He left Barik with Sarhade. Why take him away when an invisible hand was evidently pushing him towards the life of a strolling singer?

Followed by Gaspard he went into the courtyard where he stood still looking round at the home where his honor had been betrayed, but he did not enter it.

No curses or imprecations passed his lips. Without a word he sat down under the mulberry tree and with his eyes fixed on the ground he pressed his hands to his temples.

His mind was a blank; he looked at the house as at a crevice where a reptile has disappeared.

Gaspard stood dumbly by his side, breathing hard, utterly overcome by his emotion.

A little way off the horse with the load of tools on his back stood patiently in the yard waiting till he was taken to his stable. But the two men had no thought for him, they were both living through the tragedy that had just occurred.

Gaspard was wondering how he could avenge his master on the spot, and on whom; unconsciously his arms and hands moved.

As for Thathoul, nothing existed for him any more, all was finished.

He could of course pursue his faithless wife across mountains and plains, searching the villages until he found her in order to punish her as she deserved. . . . But he did not see the use of it; it was not possible now to check the devastating flood which, rising in his own home, had spread everywhere—his honor would still be lying sullied in the mud. And to weep? What was the good of that? It would not save his child. To curse? Whom, and in the name of what? There was nothing up above or down below; in whose name could he utter words which would scorch and burn? To go on working as before? Why? since nothing matters and an evil force is lying in wait ready to spring out and crush us to the earth when the moment is ripe.

What is this force? Is it God? Or is there something else more powerful, more bloodthirsty, than God Himself? Thathoul did not know; after all what did it matter—whatever this power it was evil and iniquitous, the mother of disaster, calamity itself. . . .

He shivered with cold. A shudder seemed to pass through him from the earth, and his whole body shook as with the ague. . . .

There was silence for a long time while he stood thus; then he turned to his companion:

"Gaspard, it is all a lie," he said through his teeth.

"What is, master?"

"Everything; the world, the sun, you and I, men, religion; it is only make-believe."

"But, master, that is a sin . . . it is. . . ."

Thathoul straightened himself with a bound as though to hurl himself against the sky. With wild eyes and swelling chest, his face distorted with passion, he struck the ground furiously with his foot, shouting:

"Then who took away the sight from Barik's eyes? Where is he? Give back his sight! Oh, if only I could catch the thief! . . . Marane, Marane, whose lips are pressed to yours now? Look, the walls are standing, the roof has not fallen in. . . . What is honor? An empty thing! I throw it on the ground and spit on it."

And snatching his hat from his head he flung it on the ground. . . .

Evening fell, and the church bells pealed slowly calling the faithful to prayer.

"Gaspard, do you hear that? It is He who has ruined me, and He still calls us to prayer. He who has spurned my prayers as one spurns a putrefying body, leaving it for the dogs to devour! And He calls, He invites us to come! Ah . . . ah! Do you hear it? . . . Ah! . . ."

Thathoul laughed jerkily as the Angelus pealed forth, each yell of laughter noisier and more fiendish than the last until it became a crazy nameless din. Laughing insanely, like a soul in torment, he rushed wildly up and down, until he stopped in front of the horse and suddenly became silent. He approached on tip-toe and then stopped dead with haggard eyes and panting breath. The poor beast, weary with the load on its back and the long day's work, was waiting patiently with drooping head, a picture of docile endurance; all his dumb tragic soul was reflected in the look he gave his master.

"Why do you look at me like that, you evil beast?" cried Thathoul. "Tell me, is there still anything left for me to endure?"

He stepped back crazily and then, drawing near again, he seized the heavy ax from the bag of tools and, whilst Gaspard's attention was centered on Barik, he struck the animal's head again and again with the strength and fury of a maniac. The horse staggered and reeled, crashing backwards on his hind quarters. From there he raised his bleeding head, hideously crushed and broken, to gaze at his master for the last time with his tor-

tured glazing eyes, then with a dull thud he fell all his length, the blood streaming from his mouth and nostrils.

Gaspard, coming up at that moment, stood at first paralyzed with horror; then he turned and ran to the gate opening on to the road to call for help, as assuredly his master had lost his reason. But he had hardly got outside when a terrible cry from Thathoul made him rush back. . . . Too late. A second victim had fallen to the strong skillful hand; the ax had whirled through the air again and with the frenzy of a madman Thathoul had split open his own head. He fell all his length by the side of the horse.

In an agony of despair Gaspard threw himself down beside him, whilst Barik, overcome with terror, knew not where to hide. Gradually darkness descended on the scene bringing with it the silence of death.

Days and weeks passed, until one bitter winter night the Town-Clerk was found strangled in his bed.

No one knew who had killed him. There were questions, arrests and examinations of some of the villagers, but all to no purpose. The murderer could not be found. One evening after vespers in the dim old church a man made a sobbing confession to the priest, and his tears fell on the venerable hand which he held fast in his own.

The priest, very pale and deeply moved, murmured a few words in a tone so low that it seemed as though he feared lest the saints in their niches gazing down on the scene should overhear.

"All is well, my son. . . . You thought and acted rightly. . . . Expiation is a just thing. . . . The expiation for blood which has been shed. . . ."

IX

On they go, on and on without stopping.

There are three of them; two are blind but the third can see.

The latter is a strongly built man, wild and fierce of aspect, like a conquered giant, who, in terrible battlefields far away, has left the corpses of his brothers a prey to cruel wolves and winter storms, and himself wanders desperately by hidden tracks, his lips sealed on an eternal secret and a tragic resolve behind his

tortured brow. His powerful head with its shock of prematurely white hair is always bowed, and he walks with his eyes fixed on the ground as though searching amongst the stones and dust and herbage for something he will never find. On his face, which is like a somber autumn sky, never a line or a wrinkle changes, and his thickly fringed eyelids are never raised on his dull eyes. His broad back is bent as though by an invisible burden as he moves silently and heavily forward, and at every step he seems to pause as if to assure himself that another instant of his life has passed and that the dark road twisting onwards into the shadowy future is at any rate that little bit shorter.

In each hand he holds a staff; on one leans himself and the other he holds out to an old blind man who walks behind him.

The old man is as tall and thin as an oak that has grown up instead of spreading outwards, and he walks with the majesty of a sightless god gazing up at the infinite. His white beard is ragged and weathered, and with his impassive countenance like polished ivory he advances on his way, aloof and indifferent, like a cloud sailing over the world. With lips slightly parted he seems to be listening to music from the spheres which he alone can hear.

Sometimes his lips move in a smile, but the rest of his face remains immobile. Over his shoulder is slung a guitar, and he walks quietly behind his guide, leaning on his staff and led by the stick which they both hold.

The third, a child, with one hand tucked in the old man's belt and the other holding his little stick, advances in the dust with short uncertain steps, his wide-open sightless eyes fixed on the old man's shoulder where the guitar is swinging.

The instrument sighs and sobs and sounds such as none have ever heard before rise on the air.

Grief, passionate and palpitating, deep as the shadowy abyss from which lost souls cry, yet cruelly beautiful, rises like a chant by the bier of holy truth.

Far away in dark caves agonizing sorrow wakes and breaks into mocking laughter and bitter weeping. The limitless sea rises in storm-tossed might and the white-crested roaring waves, like avenging Furies with wild locks streaming in the wind, rush on the wings of terror towards the shore.

Even the rude insensate crowd are struck dumb by the storm

and passion of his music and listen reverently. For a moment their coarse brutal minds are touched by the song of these tormented souls.

Then the old man smiles his cold still smile.

"Play, little one," he says, bending towards the child.

With frail white fingers the boy touches the cords, which utter a sad lament.

No more tempest, no more lightning.

These are the shadows which creep down from the mountains when evening comes. They are somber cypresses chanting a requiem in the midnight hours by the side of a sleeping lake. They are the pale rays of twilight submitting without protest to the supremacy of darkness. They are the rushes along the river bank lamenting over the drowned maiden as she floats by with her long hair outspread.

They are vast fields drawing weary panting breath under the mists of evening; they are the tired stars sparkling wanly in the dawn, like the eyes of suffering children longing for rest. It is life—the everlasting mournful song of life.

Those who listen are touched by this burden of suffering, and their eyes shine with tears.

"How wonderfully the little minstrel sings of sorrow," murmur those who have suffered.

Then the two blind players wrap up their instruments and sling them on their shoulders, their guide approaches and this strange procession of song and grief goes on its way to other countries and far horizons over which the sorrows of the world hang like a heavy cloud, where poverty stalks abroad and justice is trampled underfoot.

It is Gaspard who leads Sarhade and Barik.

On they go, on and on without stopping.

THE STORY OF MY DOVECOT

By T. BABEL

As a child I had a great longing to possess a dovecot; it was the most passionate desire of my life, and in 1904 when I was nine years old my father decided to give me one with three pairs of doves. At that time I was preparing the entrance examination for the school of Nicolaiev, that being the name of the town in the department of Cherson where my parents lived. At the present time, however, this department no longer exists and our town is governed from Odessa.

I was nine years old at the time and was living in constant fear of the examination; even now, twenty years later, I can still feel the dread that the approach of this ordeal caused me, although I was good in arithmetic and Russian. At the school amongst a total of one hundred pupils only five Jews were accepted, and in the preparatory class of forty only two were taken. The professors were specially hard on us, and it was to encourage me to get the necessary number of five marks that my father had promised me the pigeons. Between my studies, my fear of the result of the examination and my desire for the pigeons I lived as though in a nightmare, but in spite of these difficulties I passed my examination successfully.

I was a clever child and despite the examiners' efforts to trip me my intelligence and my memory did not play me false and I got ten marks. Then everything changed. Karitou Efroussi, a corn merchant engaged in the export trade with Marseilles, bribed the authorities with five hundred roubles to accept his son, and in consequence they gave me less than five marks and took young Efroussi in my place. I was very advanced for my age, having studied all the school subjects from the age of six, and my father was heartbroken when I was refused admittance. He even talked of fighting Efroussi, or paying some one else to do so, but my mother persuaded him not to do anything violent, and I began

to prepare for another examination which would admit me into the first class in the following year. My parents arranged with my teacher that during that year I should do the work of the preparatory class as well as that of the first year, and thus I studied three subjects very thoroughly—Smirnov's grammar, Evtuszevski's arithmetic and the history of Russia by Pouczykovicz. These books are no longer used, but I learnt them by heart and that was how I won five and a half marks next year from Professor Karavaiev. My brilliant success was for long the talk of our little town, and my father was extraordinarily proud of it. It is painful to remember the change it wrought in him and how easily he let himself be influenced by passing events whether good or bad.

I had more respect for Professor Karavaiev than for my father. The former had completed his studies at Moscow; he was hardly thirty years of age and his smooth cheeks were fresh and rosy as those of a boy living in the country, though a hairy mole on one side of his face rather spoilt his looks. My other examiner, Inspector Piatnicki, who was very well known both at the school and throughout the department, questioned me on the subject of Peter the Great with whose history I was very familiar through Pouchkine's poetry. With a catch in my breath and trembling with nervousness I began to recite the verses of this great poet. The magnificent lines carried me away and I declaimed the story with passionate ardor. No one made any attempt to stop the torrent until Piatnicki, turning his old lined face with its venerable white beard towards Karavaiev, said, "These Jews are as clever as the devil!" When I had finished the poem he said, "That's very good, little man, now you can go."

I walked out of the classroom and leaned against the wall of the corridor finding it hard to bring myself back to reality. The Russian children who were playing there came up and surrounded me, probably with the idea of some fun at my expense or making me put up a fight, but the arrival of Piatnicki stopped them. Standing by my side he told the school-children to leave me alone, and, turning to me, he said:

"Tell your father, my little friend, that you are accepted for the first class."

I looked up at him, much impressed by the dazzling array of

medals on his dark uniform, and then as the servant appeared bringing him tea I ran off home.

I found a peasant making some purchases in our shop, but as soon as my father saw me he left his customer to come and listen to my story. On hearing of my success he immediately told his assistant to close the shop, and would have gone out to buy me a school cap at once had not my mother, who had turned very pale and was petting and scolding me by turns, dissuaded him, saying that God would punish us and the neighbors would jeer if we bought the uniform before the official list was published. My mother looked at me sadly, for she alone realized how ill-fated all our family were. The men of our family were optimistic and impulsive, but we were always unlucky. My grandfather, who had been a Rabbi at Biela Cerkow, was driven away from there and had then taken up the study of foreign languages, but at the age of eighty he had lost his reason. My uncle Louis, my father's brother, studied at Vologna, and in 1892, wishing to avoid military service, he fled to California with the Superintendent's daughter. He deserted her at Los Angeles, and later died miserably in a wretched hovel surrounded by negroes and Malays. After his death the American authorities forwarded us the Californian inheritance—a large chest containing my uncle's Talmud, his dumb-bells, locks of women's hair, some ties, a pair of gold cuff links and various boxes of tea. The only members of our family still living were my mad grandfather at Odessa, my father and myself. My father had an enthusiastic love for humanity and an unbounded confidence in his fellow men, which is never justifiable, and that is why he was always deceived and victimized, but it made him believe that bad luck always pursued him and those he loved. There remained then only myself on whom my mother Rachel could count, and I was small and delicate like all the Jews and suffered very much from my head. My mother, who was not blinded like my father by vanity and naïve optimism, saw things clearly and cherished no illusions that our family would one day become great and powerful. She saw no happy future and would not tempt Fate by buying my school uniform before I was to begin my classes and only commemorated my examination by having my portrait enlarged.

On September 20th, 1905, the names of the successful candi-

dates were published with mine amongst them. All my family went to see the list, even Szoil, my uncle by marriage. I was very fond of this old man who sold fish in the market-place. He was different from other people in that he had huge hands that were always wet and smelt strongly of fish and he told wonderful stories of the Polish Rebellion of 1861. At one time he had been an innkeeper at Skurre, where, he said, he had seen Count Godlevski and other Polish rebels shot by the soldiers of Nicholas I. Perhaps he had seen nothing of the sort, for I know now that he was only an ignorant old man with a great idea of the picturesque, but in any case I shall never forget his thrilling stories. Yes, even old Szoil went to the school on purpose to see the list, and in the evening, indifferent to the fact that most people despised him, he danced at our party.

It was my father who had organized this party to which he had invited all his friends, including the corn merchants and the commercial travelers for agricultural implements. The latter were feared and disliked by the peasants and landowners because they could never get rid of them without having to buy something, but of all the Jews these commercial travelers were the jolliest. At our party they were singing the Chassyd songs which are composed of just three words repeated with different stressing. To realize the strange charm of these songs one should hear them at Easter in the synagogues of their own country. We had also old Mr. Libermann, my professor of Hebrew, who, after drinking a little more of the strong wine of Bessarabia than was good for him, proceeded to make a speech in Hebrew in my honor in which he spoke enthusiastically of my parents and alluded to my victory over our enemies—the sons of heavy-jowled Russian capitalists. He compared my victory to that of David, King of the Jews, who overcame Goliath and prophesied that like me our people would eventually triumph through their intelligence, after which he broke down in tears, but encouraged by another glass of wine he rose again and cried, “Bravo!” Then the guests seized him by the hand and all began to dance the old-fashioned Quadrilles, as is still done at weddings in our little Jewish towns. Everybody was gay and happy, even my mother who, contrary to her usual custom, had taken a little wine, for she did not like it and could never understand how people could enjoy Vodka,

and for this reason she regarded the Russians as fools and looked upon their women with contempt.

The days that followed were happy ones for my mother. In the morning before I set off for school she used to cut my sandwiches, and before the classes began she had been busy buying material and making my clothes for school. Children take a special joy in anything new and my mother shared this pleasure with me. We took a month to get used to the early breakfasts, when I drank my tea set out on the big table in the lamp-light, after which I would fold my napkin and, gathering my books together, set off for school. We were so happy in this new life that it was not until the end of the first month that I thought about my pigeons.

My uncle Szoil had made me a little dovecot from an old drawer; it was painted brown and had a nest for each pair of birds and was fitted with a special little arrangement that I had invented to capture strange pigeons. On Sunday, October 20th, I set out for the market with four roubles and fifty copecks in my pocket to make my purchases, but unforeseen difficulties lay along my path.

I had started my school course in the autumn of 1905, just after the Emperor Nicholas had proclaimed the constitution of the Russian people, and at that time street orators, dressed in shabby great-coats, used to harangue the crowd that collected near the Town-Hall, and at night gun-shots could be heard so that my mother was afraid to let me venture out. On the morning of October 20th our water carrier left his work and was to be seen, looking very clean and dressed in his best clothes, strolling up and down the road. The next unusual thing we noticed was young Kalistov, the baker's son, doing gymnastic exercises on a leather horse standing in the middle of the bridge. No one attempted to stop him, and the Constable even urged him to jump higher. The latter was wearing a broad silk belt and his boots had a marvelous polish. Moreover he was not in uniform, which made my mother very nervous and she would not let me go out. However, I managed to slip away unnoticed and hurried off to the market which was behind the station.

I found Ivan Nikodimycz, the dove-merchant, in his usual place at the market, and that day he had some rabbits as well as

a peacock that turned its dainty head from side to side as it moved delicately with its tail spread out like a fan. I bought two couples of pigeons from the old man and put them in a bag which I held close to me inside my overcoat. When I had paid for them I had forty copecks left, but the old merchant was unwilling to let me have a couple of doves from Krioukow at that price, although that was all they were worth, for he was a hard bargainer. However, I hung about and later on when he saw he was not likely to have any other customers he called me over, and eventually everything ended as I wished.

Towards midday a man crossing the market-place called out to Ivan Nikodimycz:

"Gather your things together; the citizens of Palestine are about to receive the constitution. In Rybna Street old Babel has been killed. . . ."

"To no purpose," muttered Ivan Nikodimycz. "To no purpose," he repeated harshly, and began to gather his rabbits and the peacock together, and it was then that he let me take the pair of doves for my forty copecks. I put them in the bag with the others and then stood watching the people as they rushed away from the market. In the distance I could see the peacock perching on Ivan's shoulder with its brilliant tail outspread, like sunshine against the gray autumn sky, and for a long time my gaze followed the old man carrying his cages covered with bright-colored clothes. By this time the market-place was deserted, and suddenly the air was rent by the sharp sound of firing close at hand. I ran towards the station for safety and after crossing a square found myself in a blind alley where old Makerenko, in his wheelchair, had already sought shelter. He propelled himself all over the town selling cigarettes and was a great favorite with all the children. Seeing him there I naturally went up to him, and, still out of breath, I asked him if he had seen my uncle Szoil.

But the cripple did not reply; his broad face was wreathed in smiles as he watched his wife, Katiousza, counting the things spread out on the ground.

"What is there?" he asked.

"Forty pairs of slippers," said Katiousza, without looking up, "six towels, and now I am counting the caps. . . ."

"Caps!" cried Makerenko with a break in his voice. "You

see, Katiousza, how unlucky I am! Others have carried off linen whilst we have only got caps! . . ."

As a matter of fact a good-looking woman was crossing the alley carrying a bundle of sheets in one arm and a woolen blanket in the other; in a cheerful voice she was calling to her children and did not even hear Makerenko, as he wheeled his chair up behind her, asking with his hat in his hand:

"Little lady, little lady, where did you get those beautiful sheets?"

As she disappeared a young peasant drove up in a cart and asked where everybody was running to.

"Everybody is in Soborna Street," replied Makarenko. "All have gone down there. Bring me anything that you can get hold of there, my lad, and I will buy it."

Hearing this, the fellow whipped up his horses and galloped off. The alley was quiet again, and it was then that the cripple glanced at me with his dull eyes.

"What have you got in your bag?" he asked, taking it from me. And putting in his hand he drew out a pigeon which perched on his palm.

"Pigeons!" cried Makerenko. "Pigeons!" he repeated, as though echoing his own words, and drawing near he struck me with all his force, crushing the pigeon against my head. The blow was so violent and unexpected that I fell down on the ground in my new coat.

"Their race must be destroyed," said Katiousza. "I hate them with all my heart."

She said a good deal more, but I could not hear it. I was lying on the ground with the entrails of the pigeon smeared all over my head, blood was running down my face blocking one eye and I had shut the other so as not to see what was going on around. What a cruel place the world was! When I opened my eyes I saw near by a stone resembling the face of an old woman with a nutcracker jaw and by it lay a piece of string and a few downy feathers from the dead bird. Yes, the world was very cruel, and I shut my eyes again and cowered down against the earth. There seemed nothing in common between this earth and our life with its problems. Somewhere in the distance the clatter of a horse's hoofs could be heard, but they grew fainter and then died

away altogether. The utter desolation, which children in distress sometimes feel, overwhelmed me, suddenly breaking down the barrier between my trembling body and the still earth, and I listened to her voice as she whispered of the things she understood—of flowers and the dead—and I wept with my face pressed against her consoling bosom.

Later on as I found my way through an unknown street littered with cardboard boxes, blood-stained downy feathers still clinging to me as I walked along the deserted pavements, I began to cry again, and wept as I had never wept in all my life. Everywhere could be heard the sound of the smashing of wood, a dog trotted along ahead of me and at Karitou Efroussi's door a young peasant was hammering, sighing and smiling tipsily as he shouted incomprehensible things, but he stopped as he saw a procession coming from the Town-Hall. Old men with long beards like fans were carrying the portrait of the Emperor, flags were waving in the air, and old women, full of excitement and enthusiasm, were running alongside. When the peasant saw the procession he hid his hammer and joined it; as for me, I waited until they had all passed and then ran home.

The house was empty, the doors wide open and the grass of the courtyard crushed and trampled underfoot. The only person to be found was Kouzma, the porter, and he was in a shed watching over the dead body of Szoil.

"Where have you been?" said the old man on seeing me. "It seems an eternity since you went out. . . . You see what they have done to your uncle. . . ."

Kouzma took a couple of fish out of the old man's pocket, one of which was still alive.

"They only killed your old uncle who feared nobody," said he, throwing the fish to the cat.

"Kouzma, we must save ourselves," I whispered, as I put my arms round his broad shoulders, and standing on tip-toe, I gazed at my uncle's body. Szoil was lying on a heap of sawdust, there was a wound in his chest and his beautiful beard was in disorder; his bare dirty feet were thrust into heavy boots. Kouzma washed the body, pressed the lips together and arranged the beard.

"He feared nobody," he repeated with a sad smile as he kissed

the dead man's eyelids. "He would have thought nothing of fighting the Tartars if he had met them; but this was on account of affairs with the Russians and their women—and the Russians never forgive, I know them very well. . . ."

Then, taking off his apron, he took my hand, saying:

"Let us go and find your father. He has been looking for you ever since this morning, afraid that you might be killed. . . ."

Hand in hand we walked towards the sheriff's office where my father and mother were awaiting the end of the pogrom.

THE SHADOW OF THE TOWER

By MIHALY BABETI

I HAVE meditated a long while about the person to whom I should send these notes and observations. I first thought of simply sending them to a scientist, but I soon abandoned that idea. I am a scientist of sorts myself, so I know how unbelieving these people are; they would not take my story seriously.

Perhaps, with witnesses chosen amongst my friends, or making them watch the phenomenon themselves, waiting for it to occur again, months hence perhaps. . . .

But who would do that for me? I haven't the time.

The Almighty has passed sentence on me; He has counted the hours I have to live, Glory be to His name.

Happy are those that can accept the will of the Lord, so that is why I am writing to you, Sir; you, whose calling is to relate and explain creeds and symbols.

The thing that happened to me will not enrich humanity's treasure of knowledge; science will have nothing to do with such things. Indeed she is afraid of them, as if she was treading on forbidden ground. It belongs to the kingdom of fables—fables are sent to us by God, and He sends very few.

It was one fine summer evening at the convent of Szentmarton. The carriage was waiting for me at the station, for it was a long distance from there to the old convent, miles away from everything. It was the home of old and crippled priests, unable to teach or to administer a parish, who lived near God in that retired part of the world.

It would have been impossible to have found anywhere a spot more favorable to meditation. I was going there as an invalid, although I brought with me books and scientific notes I wanted to finish while I was in that retreat. The great calm that accompanies the twilight had descended like a mantle upon the hills when I first beheld the old convent. It was a monument

dating from Bela the Third, with a strange tower, which seemed to have been left unfinished by the builder. In the background was the wonderful deep blue of the sky. The monotonous rumble of the carriage wheels mingled with the melancholy chirping of the crickets. In front of me, the driver swayed to and fro, his black coat and cocked hat making him look like an undertaker. We were going along slowly like a black boat sailing across a calm sea.

"O God, if Thy will is that this is my last journey, I accept Thy will," was my prayer.

An hour later I was sitting in the calm atmosphere of the convent refectory among the old priests. Some of them were friends of long standing with whom I had lived in other convents.

They inquired about those they used to know. We talked of old times, then strolled out into the garden to enjoy the beautiful evening. The garden paths wound under the trees in the shadows and the sharp outlines of the convent stood out against the sky. It was only then that I noticed the tower was quite apart from the rest of the building, so that it was possible to walk right round it, and the extraordinary shape of the unfinished building roused my curiosity.

"Now the tower is abandoned and the gardener uses it as a tool shed," the superior told me when I inquired about it.

Our colleague, the professor of comparative philology, told me that there was a story associated with the tower—it is a legend very similar to that of "Kelemen-the-Mason": A young girl was entombed alive within these walls.

The old Hungarian legend of "Kelemen-the-Mason" is a story of a nobleman who built with his own hands a tower—but his work was always miraculously destroyed as he went on. One day he heard the voice of God saying, "You will be allowed to finish your tower if you entomb therein the first woman who passes this way." The nobleman took the risk. His wife was the first woman who passed, and she fell a victim to his ambition.

"O Lord, thou hast sent very few fables to mankind; that of Kelemen-the-Mason and this one that is so like it. We are in a very primitive country where legends still live."

I came out of my arched roofed cell keener than ever to see

by daylight the strange abode where henceforth I was to live. I walked through many dark passages, and was blinded by the glare of the light on reaching the open. It seemed to me that a myriad of bees were humming in the sunshine, and I was dazzled by the blue sky above the garden, which appeared as an immense sea of flowers melting into the sky on the horizon.

The air was laden with a sweet perfume and the golden light overshadowed the earth's beautiful cloak of flowers. In the cool clear morning air the mysterious tower cast its shadow over all this splendor with its wealth of color.

As I gazed on a red flower, a butterfly suddenly flew away. And all this splendor seemed to sing praises to the glory of our Creator.

I sat in the sun with my breviary, and offered thanks to the Lord for having directed my steps towards this place, which was a Paradise. I thanked him for the flowers, the butterflies, and for the beautiful old designs on the convent walls, which seemed to smile as they basked in the sunshine; for the sun itself, for the strange old tower and the graceful silhouette of the gardener's wife leaning over to water the flowers, all these wonders were pleasant to my eyes. A wide open space encircled the tower and there were flower beds running wild through lack of care, for nobody ever came that way. My colleagues remained in their rooms, and, when leaving, used the street door. Only in the evening did they venture near the tower. I, being a guest, passed my morning near the tower, only leaving when the convent bell rang for lunch. When I was tired of reading, I enjoyed the splendor of the garden or talked to the gardener's wife, whose naïve simplicity was most refreshing.

The monotony of autumn had fallen upon us, and the sunny days had passed. I hardly noticed in the end that I scarcely read, as I sat there with my book lying on my knees, dazzled by the sun. The garden seemed to have a strange power over me; I tried to free myself, and find another lonely spot, but invariably came back and sat in front of the tower, in the midst of the silent joy of the flowers, bathing in the sea of brilliant light. Behind me, the sunflowers were swinging their yellow heads, and the multicolored balls on the blue garden railings held my gaze. I was like a person hypnotized and I could not move until the

tinkle of the lunch bell released me. The strange tower rose in front of me; above it the sun with its blinding rays seemed to form part of the tower, and vanish in the distance, but its shadow, like a gigantic needle, cast its sinister darkness on the quivering flowers.

As midday drew nearer the effect became more phantom-like.

Yes, phantom-like. Have you ever noticed, Sir, that there is something phantom-like about the hour of noon, as there is midnight—all movement ceases, everything is quiet—the world seems to pause and wait; there is a great silence, a great dread; nature stops breathing; the merciless sunlight does not lessen the ghostly effect. On the contrary, everything being lit up, nothing can be hidden, there is no shelter, no shade. The world is naked, a prey to the great danger that it feels approaching. The very light does not seem natural, it is a brilliant white glare like that of a full moon. The great calm and loneliness are then awful. Often I sat on the garden bench, like a downcast beast, without a thought, but conscious of some inexplicable fear. I thought it might be the effect of the sun. The sun has impassibly followed its course across the sky, its burning rays mercilessly revealing every detail. Alone in the midst of this light, the tower cast its deep shadow, like a huge black tombstone. I experienced a moment of bestial stupidity and bewilderment until I rose and staggered along like a drunkard to the convent, where I had lunch within the cool walls. And the afternoon passed in a heavy torpor.

Oh, these noon hours! It is of these moments that I will tell you.

The day had begun as usual. I was talking to the gardener's wife, who had brought her little girl out into the sun.

The pebbles on the path were scrunching under the wheels of the perambulator, where a pale, pretty face could be seen lying on the pillow. "My darling is ill," said the woman, who, herself, looked so frail that one would doubt whether she were a peasant.

"The sunshine will do her a lot of good," I replied. And really, at that moment, the sun seemed kind and well disposed. The morning air was warm, and light shadows were flitting over the golden hills. It was with pleasure that I took up my book, and

when I was reading, I forgot the midday numbness. I read for a while, then the book dropped into my lap, and I looked around to gaze upon the pleasing scene, which seemed ever new to me. The young woman, wanting to return to her duties, seemed to hesitate as to whether she could leave the child in the open or take her indoors, and so I offered to look after the little one. I must confess (it may seem ridiculous to you), that my old priest's heart was delighted to have, if only for an hour, so fatherly a task.

The child was lying silent, the sun rose higher and higher and the usual torpidity overcame me. The many hued balls shone strangely throwing back distorted reflections; my gaze wandered dazzled by the richness and variety of the colors. The garden seemed to sway before my eyes; things met and mingled confusedly, the tower seemed to sway against the blue sky; a wasp danced, flew and droned before me from left to right, high and low in the vibrating furnace. I closed my eyes.

I closed my eyes. . . . Bright darkness, warm and velvety, overcame my brain like a soft helmet, blue-and-red spots with rainbow borders swarmed before me, one of them shot up so high, but I could not follow it—the droning was dying down, noon was near.

Suddenly a frightened wail came forth from the perambulator. I opened my eyes, scared. Oh, the phantom-like noon was around me. I felt as if I had alighted on another planet. The inexorable dazzling white light, hovering over everything, the awful silence and the only shadow that of the tower across the garden and, in the shadow of the tower, the perambulator, and in the perambulator, as if she felt the eeriness of the hour, the child was crying.

All of a sudden, I felt afraid and my heart galloped beneath my cassock. I soon knew the reason for this agitation. The carriage had not been in the shade of the tower, in fact, it had been very far away. I glanced towards the sun and the other shadow thrown across the grass, then I looked at the shadow of the tower. There was absolutely no doubt about it, the shadow was not in the direction that it should have been according to all optical laws. Just follow, you will see. The sun was above the tower, a little to the left, and thus the shadow should have

fallen as the others did, to the right, whereas it fell to the left, right over the child's perambulator.

I do not know, Sir, if you can imagine how horrified I was. I am a man of science and used to scientific experiments, but there was no possibility of accounting for this strange occurrence, no other light existed that could cause the shadow to deviate in such a way. To tell you the truth, I never tried to fathom the mystery. I sat there amazed and stupefied before what could only be described as a miracle.

Noon was indeed more fantastical than midnight. All around, the brilliant light flooded everything, and all the shadows were on the right—there was no darkness, no mysterious shelter or any possible hiding place, everything was clear, pure and irrefutable.

My dread increased every instant as I watched the huge black phantasmagorical shadow extending across the gravel of the path, like an immense black sheet on the perambulator. In the midday silence, the child was crying, a piteous frightened wail, as if she knew that the shadow cast across her was unnatural. It was as though the single blue-black spot, the only shadow in contradiction with nature, gave a strange signification to the mid-day heat, the silence of the birds hidden in the bushes and to the cries of the little girl.

I was so overcome by the strange sight that I could neither move nor speak until the gardener's wife, hearing her child crying, ran out and without looking my way, rushed madly up to the perambulator. Her behavior was like that of an animal afraid for its young (it is often so with women), and, snatching up the child, she ran into the house.

Thoughtfully, I followed her with my eyes and I could not help connecting the strange shadow, the child's cries and the mother's animal-like fright. I should have liked to have known that it was all an illusion, but the shadow was still there in its unnatural position.

The lunch bell startled me back to sanity. As I went through the dark-walled passages, the red-and-green spots still danced before my eyes, and strange thoughts haunted me, but when I reached the cool white refectory, the restful calm drove away the terrified impression of which I was then beginning to be ashamed.

How could I have related my adventure to these happy old priests? I began to doubt. I had perhaps been dreaming, but to make sure whether I had or not, I made up my mind to find some plausible excuse to bring some one to watch the phenomenon. But in the afternoon clouds drew a thick gray veil across the sky, and, when a pale light shone through a thinner part of the veil causing feeble shadows, I could see that that of the tower was in its usual place.

Had it been a dream after all, or had my eyes been dazzled by the brightness of the sun, so that I had seen things which did not exist? I really could not believe either one or the other of these explanations. In trying to solve the problem, I lost all peace, and my thoughts obstinately came back to the tower. Closing my eyes again, I could recall the vision, resembling a picture with a big mistake in perspective which caught my eyes and prevented me from noticing anything else. My memory recalled more details and I remembered that, not only did the shadow fall in an unusual direction but was much longer than it should have been in proportion to the length of the other shadows. The way it had grown and spread was simply miraculous, otherwise it could never have reached the perambulator. I could only think of the whole occurrence as having actually happened, and I wanted it, yet dreaded, to happen again.

However, the sky was overcast for several days and autumn seemed to be really with us. At a loose end, I would sit in my room with my books, my old complaint would come back, and my temper was bad. I would have given anything to see the sun and feel its warmth again.

One morning, however, I saw the blue sky through the railings of my cell and the rays of sunshine on the floor. I was seized with sudden fright and I knew that in a few hours I would go down to the mysterious garden and sit before the tower with the strange shadow.

The first morning, I was disappointed yet inwardly pleased. The shadow followed the sun and did not for one moment show any inclination to deviate from the beaten track, everything was normal. The day after nothing happened, the sun had come out again; and bathed the earth with light and heat. St. Martin's Summer was here. I sat in my usual place, and the days were

no different from the first one I had passed at the convent. The only change was that many dead leaves fell faster and faster; they lay strewn about the paths in spite of the efforts of the gardener's wife who tried to sweep them away.

When the red rust of autumn mingled with the bright red of the last flower, the perambulator was no longer brought out, for the child had passed away the day after the strange happening which I have related. She is among the angels of the Lord.

I tried to resist the superstitious thought connected with this death, and I was beginning to be sure that the midday glare of the sun had hallucinated me, and that I had been a victim of an optical illusion. Yet, at other times, I was convinced that some strange presentiment had caused me to imagine that I had seen the shadow, and then I began to think quite rationally. This showed that I was less distressed.

However, one day, as I sat reading in my usual place, when summer heat had become autumnal warmth, a great calm reigned, and I was alone at the foot of the tall sunflowers. Lord, the old dog, was warming himself in the sun; and on the grass a pigeon was strutting about; further away I could see the russet apples gleaming on the branches of a low apple tree. I looked up and gazed laughingly at the peaceful picture and then turned to the shadow of the tower. "You'll no longer deceive me," I said to the shadow. "The great light that dazzles and distorts things has faded, and shadows must play no more tricks."

I had scarcely thought this when the shadow moved. Yes, Sir, just as I am telling you, the shadow described a big half circle to the right, then swayed back several times like an immense pendulum. Do you understand? Everything was calm, and the other shadows were quite still, as was the tower against the sky.

Yet the shadow was oscillating as if a huge lantern was being swung to and fro behind the tower, or as if the sun was swaying. I watched very closely but it was the only thing moving; it was more and more mysterious. The shadow spread across the lawn, across the road, from left to right, and stretched and shrank itself like the arm of a monstrous cuttle-fish.

How can I describe the terror of the moment? The pigeon, flapping its wings wildly, flew towards the apple tree; the dog

got up and whined, the wild flowers shuddered. The shadow seemed to crunch the gravel as if it was heavy; the grass bowed down before it and bounced back again and a tamarind tree bent beneath the weight. Suddenly the shadow in one last swing threw itself over the spot where the dog was lying and Lord jumped up, mouth open and panting, watching the shadow stretching towards him. It fell on him like a huge black hand and stopped.

The dog, like a wounded animal, fell with an awful death rattle and then ran away howling. I cannot describe what I felt like and I passed the evening in prayer. I had a vision of the young woman who had been entombed alive in the tower. Oh! Lord! (I prayed), if the story is true give peace to her soul!

But there was no peace for my soul. Being a priest, I have always believed in miracles, and I have never made the mistake of scientists who think that they can rule the universe with their human mathematics. All the same, there is a big margin between believing in miracles and seeing them. I confess that my thoughts were upset. God's ways are unfathomable, the consequence of a crime is terrible; generation after generation we still feel them and even the innocent are victims. I thought of the sick child I had seen cry in the shade of the tower on the eve of his death.

Next day I anxiously looked around for the dog. The poor beast had "broken its pipe." "It is a very old dog," said the gardener. My heart stopped beating, and as I anxiously glanced at the tower I felt myself getting worse and I recall the words my doctor had spoken and they seemed to have a hidden and awful meaning. Something warned me to stay away from the tower, and yet once more, on one sunny morning, an invisible and irresistible force guided my steps to my usual place; I could not leave it before noon. The autumnal scene affected me deeply, it fascinated me, and although my health was failing, I thought of the healing faculties of the light. We had a glorious autumn, greenish gold virgin threads were floating through the warm air and all living things were enjoying the last fine days. But, alas! they were not restful days for me, for I could feel the strange and deep pains within me and I thought of death drawing near. I obstinately wrote, wanting to finish a part of my work before

the angel of death appeared before me. What could a miserable worm like me do before the Creator? The Lord does not use exterior forces to keep us from acting against His will. He sends our very soul against ourselves. Happy are they who accept His Will. The Lord hath said unto His servant, "I no longer need your work," and He made my soul anxious so that I should abandon my task, and He put before me, like His own finger, a fatal sign, the strange tower, so that I could gaze at it in anguish for hours.

At any moment I was expecting to see the shadow move and fall upon me. Then came the day . . . with a large swing the shadow moved. Very still I waited and prayed and I did not try to flee, but my heart beat very hard as the shadow oscillated two or three times, stretched out, shrank back, curled up before the bushes and then fell on me, hiding the sun from my eyes.

I confess that as I write my heart still thumps and I beg the Lord to forgive me my sins and make me one of His chosen ones. . . . I am already on my way to that place from whence there can be no return.

THE BETEL-SELLER

By BIJAY SEN GUPTA

I

FOR some time past she had taken her stand just at the point where the roads cross. She was a betel-seller, and her "stand" was on the direct way leading to the offices; therefore her best business time were the hours when the offices opened and when they closed doors. Every one who ate her betels always admitted that she was undoubtedly a master in the art of betel-making.

She was about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. She was always heavily veiled and went on, with bowed head, with her work; only when absolutely necessary did she use to lift up her head.

The younger office clerks had occasionally tried to flirt and jest with her, but they were never successful. Once, some one more forward than others had gone a bit too far, but, they say, the look she gave him was enough to make him slink away like a whipped cur.

Having seen her daily for some time the clerks naturally knew her manners and habits fairly well; they all knew that though only a betel-seller she was refined and gentle in her ways, but she could not endure any one speaking to her.

Lately a vendor of books had also taken up his "stand" near hers. Having collected a great number of new and second-hand books, he had nicely arranged them on the railing by the side of the street. But books cannot always be sold, so in his spare time he either used to sit quietly or sometimes gaze at her.

The betel-seller, however, was always busy with her own work.

Once upon a time she was called by the name of Mena. The story of her early life is simple enough—like that of most others in our country. She was the only child of her parents. In towns the marriageable age for girls has been of late considerably raised,

but the light of civilization has not yet penetrated into the villages. No sooner had she attained her tenth year than Mena was given in marriage. It is true that she did not realize the seriousness of marriage at this age. Nevertheless she was impressed with the pomp of the ceremony and was highly delighted with the presents of new and multicolored dresses.

Four or five years passed since then. Mena had already learnt all her household duties. Every one praised her gentle nature and her extreme cleverness. Outwardly everything seemed to go on smoothly, but a strange uneasiness began to make itself felt in her heart. It was not the want of material things, for she had no financial troubles; what she possessed was sufficient in a village to live on comfortably. But she yearned for something.

This longing for the unknown daily increased. As every day passed, the emptiness in her heart grew bigger and bigger. Mena tried to drown her sorrows in work; when her husband went to work, she tried to make herself forget by chatting with her neighbors, but all in vain. No sooner did she return home than the vague undescribable emptiness seemed to envelop her . . .

One day her husband noticed her preoccupied look and asked her: "What is the matter with you, Mena? Why are you sad?"

Mena only smiled in answer. What could she say? She did not know herself what was the matter with her.

Sometimes when her husband scolded her for her preoccupation and forgetfulness, Mena was piqued. She certainly had not done things wrongly on purpose. Then again she thought to herself that they must have been done purposely, no one had compelled her.

She understood nothing, but in her heart she grew bitter.

At last, after struggling with herself, when she failed to come to a satisfactory answer and had resigned herself to the inevitable, one day her husband came to her and informed her that Jagat was coming there to settle the property.

Jagat was her husband's cousin. Mena was totally unacquainted with him, for Jagat used to live in Calcutta and seldom came to the country. Therefore, when Jagat first came there, she felt shy. After a time, when the shyness passed, she and Jagat became great friends.

Gradually a change came over her. The former feeling of emptiness in her heart passed away, but as before she did not understand the reason. Formerly she could not make out why she was sad, now she was at a loss why she felt happy; nevertheless she was glad of the welcome change.

Occasionally she used to think that this feeling of gladness was something improper. The traditions and customs under which she had been brought up, her former ideals, all made her uneasy. It was not proper. Should she not check this gladness?

Thus she tried to console and to quiet herself. Many a time did she tremble when she considered the matter in her own mind, and she tried to forget herself by working for her husband and by thinking of him. But Jagat filled her mind to such an extent that no matter how hard she tried she could not drive his image away from her thoughts. Yet as far as she could understand, her feelings towards her husband were exactly the same as before. . . . In fact, now she performed her household duties in a wholehearted manner, which gave her husband great satisfaction. Sometimes he jokingly used to say to Jagat: "You see, your cousin can do everything, yet she makes out that she knows nothing."

These words filled her with a sort of gladness tinged with fear. She felt herself guilty, as though she had been found out.

The betel-seller was thinking to herself. She remembered how in search of happiness she had left her husband and come to Calcutta with Jagat and then how all her fondly cherished dreams were shattered. With the rude awakening came the realization that she had been running after a will-o'-the-wisp; what she had thought true, unassayed happiness was but a counterfeit.

Soon after arriving in Calcutta Mena realized that the former feeling of emptiness was again gradually enveloping her in its shrouds; she did not understand what her heart desired before, now after she had left her husband, it was equally inexplicable to her. On the other hand, many a time did she yearn for her husband with whom she had spent so many happy hours. But her step was irrevocable; she could not go back to her husband any more.

Then one day she left Jagat too and came out alone in the wide world. Thus she became a betel-seller.

She heaved a deep sigh.

II

Many a time, being tired of sitting alone, the vendor of books wanted to make the acquaintance of the betel-seller. But he could never muster up courage enough; he always felt a sort of fear which forced him to keep his distance.

One day the betel-seller had left her betels half finished and was gazing vacantly at the street. The vendor of books slowly came up to her and sat by her side. "Make me a couple of *pâns* (different ingredients rolled up in betel leaf)," he said.

Startled by the sudden apparition and the voice, the betel-seller looked up at him and then pulled down her veil lower. Then when the betels were ready, she softly said, "Here they are."

The book-vendor took the betels and left her without a word. He had not the courage to begin another conversation.

She was annoyed and displeased at the book-vendor's pertness, but the few words of his made a deep impression on her. The voice was too well known to her! Ten years ago she had heard the very voice every day; her husband had asked her in the same tone to prepare betels for him. The book-vendor's voice was exactly like her husband's.

She wanted to cry out loud; she wanted to let the whole world know her sorrow. But with an effort she suppressed her welling-up tears and sat there as though unconcerned. The book-vendor was looking at her from a distance.

That evening when she returned home she could not stop herself from weeping. Lying on her modest bed she sobbed for some time and then got up to put out the light. The weight was off her mind.

At night, while she slept, her dreams were a confusion of her remembrances of her husband and the voice of the book-vendor. She began to think that after all, the man had not committed any crime; he had simply asked her for some betels. She her-

self was only a betel-seller and had no right to be so high-spirited. It is true that once she was a Hindu housewife, but now. . . .

The remembrance of the past made her again uneasy.

The next day when she reached her accustomed place, all ill feelings had disappeared. She looked round to see if the book-vendor had come, but could not see him.

She occupied herself with preparing *pâns* for the office-going clerks.

The vendor of books not only did not come that day, but not for the next four or five days. Mena became unnecessarily anxious. Every day, without any reason, she considered herself more and more guilty for her behavior of a few days previous, and every day the guilt of the book-vendor was lessened in her eyes.

Thus in her heart the book-vendor was absolved of all guilt and she became vaguely anxious about him. A week after he reappeared with evident signs of a recent illness impressed upon him. With a great effort she summed up courage to address him with the words: "What was the matter with you?"

The vendor of books was astounded at her question and was unable to answer her immediately. He pulled himself together and said, "I had fever; that's why I couldn't come."

In spite of his answer it was evident that he was greatly surprised. He could not quite understand the difference in her behavior now from that of the day when he had attempted to make her acquaintance.

After the ice had been thus broken between them, they frequently had conversations together. The more Mena heard the book-vendor's voice, the more it reminded her of her husband's. She would quietly listen to him and picture up the happy past to herself. The book-vendor was encouraged and related all his life to her.

The office clerks were surprised at the sight of this friendship. Neither was this astonishing, for they had never seen her speaking to anybody. Some began to say: "She is, you know. . . ."

She was in a dilemma. Should she converse with the man in this manner? Then she thought: "What have other people to do with my affairs? Surely I can do what I like. I am only a betel-seller."

III

One day, taking advantage of her silence, the book-vendor explained to her that as they were both living alone would it not be better if the betel-seller were to come and live with him? He gave her many arguments why she should do so and patiently waited for an answer.

The betel-seller, however, remained silent with bent head.

The same thing had happened again. Jagat, too, had once spoken like that.

Though she knew not why, she had left her husband. When she eloped with Jagat she thought that Jagat would probably be able to fill the emptiness in her heart. What a mistake! That was why she was disappointed. The same emptiness still reigned in her heart; and now could the book-vendor satisfy her?

The book-vendor could not understand her silence and said: "You had better think it over and give me an answer to-morrow." Only a deep sigh was her answer.

At night while she was thinking over the conversation, she was suddenly filled with bitterness for the book-vendor. What did he take her for? Did he think that she wanted him? Or did he think that she would sell her body to the first-comer who offered her money?

Her whole body shivered.

She was angry with Jagat. Why did he tempt her? Otherwise, whatever happened, she would still have been living with her husband. Her desire was never fulfilled; she only earned bad names for herself. She could not sleep that night.

The next day she was earlier than usual in her accustomed place. She had not yet decided what answer to give to the book-vendor.

By and by the book-vendor came and began to arrange his books on the railing; then he came over to her and asked her: "Have you decided?"

She answered: "No, I have not decided yet."

The book-vendor was surprised and said: "How is that?"

"How is that? What did you take me for?"

Without giving her an answer to her question, the book-vendor asked: "Then you won't live with me?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want to. What do you think I am?"

On hearing loud voices the passers-by stopped to listen.

The book-vendor answered her with deep sarcasm: "What do I take you for? You are . . ." Without giving him an opportunity of finishing his sentence, the betel-seller was going to throw her betel-cutting knife at him. The book-vendor, on seeing this, rushed at her in order to snatch it away from her. The impact was too much for her, and in falling down she struck against the railing and cut her head.

Those who were watching the fun ran up to them and surrounded them in a minute. After a time a policeman arrived at the scene and wanted to know what the matter was.

Some one explained that the book-vendor and the betel-seller were having an argument, and as soon as the woman stood up the man had pushed her down.

The policeman on hearing this, looked at her questioningly. She straightened her veil and replied: "I was speaking to him. Suddenly I felt faint and fell down." Then she pointed at the book-vendor and added: "He did not do anything."

Every one was astounded.

The policeman asked again: "Is that true?"

With a note of dissatisfaction in her voice the betel-seller answered: "Of course it's true. Am I telling a lie then?"

At a short distance the book-vendor stood without saying a word.

ZLATÉ OF SLATINA

By GREGORY BOJOVITCH

ABOUT the time that the Turks had succeeded in quelling the Macedonian Rebellion and the unfortunate peasants were beginning to return to their devastated country-side and ruined homes, a man wearing a white military cloak was threading his way through the narrow tortuous streets on the other side of Dragor across the (river) Yeny-Mahala. He was strong and well built and carried himself with the frank fearless bearing so characteristic of the stalwart Slavs. Zlaté of Slatina, for such was his name, was on his way to Monastir to demand permission of the Turkish authorities to open a school in his native village of Poretch.

He walked with an easy stride, utterly unconscious of the fact that he was being followed. Some distance behind him, but always keeping the Serbian in view, stalked a Bulgarian Terrorist, carefully concealing the revolver which his right hand gripped tightly. They continued thus for some time until Zlaté reached Vinski Khan where he intended to stay the night. Here the Bulgarian quickened his pace and by taking a side street he got ahead of his quarry; then, as the latter drew level with him, he sprang out from the shelter of a building and with his revolver fixed on Zlaté he commanded him to follow him in the name of the Bulgarian Organization.

Being unarmed and seeing no police at hand, Zlaté obeyed. After all, he asked himself, what harm could come to him here in the town under the eyes of the civil and military authorities?

He strode easily along wondering whether he had any cause to fear the Bulgarian Organization or this Prilepien, who, it was easy to see from the way he held his Browning, was in grim earnest. It seemed to him that he had no reason to be afraid of either, for he knew only one fear—and that an inherited one—the dread of the Turk, signs of whose tyranny lay all around.

He could not fear his brother Christian even if he should change from a mere Bulgarian into a Tartar. The latter might certainly pillage and torture and even kill, but Zlaté felt confident he could face death without flinching. In some ways he was glad of the chance which Fate had thrown in his way in order to prove his courage. So in spite of his disagreeable plight he continued his way calm and fearless.

At a sharp turning where the houses abutted, almost touching each other, the Terrorist halted, and looking around him he again ordered Zlaté to follow him in the name of the Bulgarian Organization. Zlaté obediently crossed the threshold indicated and stood calmly awaiting further orders. The young Bulgar quickly took out of his sash a large piece of red silk with which he bound Zlaté eyes, and stooping, he led him through a low doorway to a further one on the left. They crossed two courts and finally arrived in a tiny house in the angle of a wall which separated it from the road. In a dark room the Terrorist took off the bandage and Zlaté was surprised to see the portrait of Damngnan Grouyev on the wall. Around the room several men were seated in obviously theatrical attitudes, looking preternaturally solemn. Zlaté immediately recognized Christo Matov, head of the Bulgarian Organization, amongst them, and Lokvitza Bogine YakovtchétoV who, anxious to impress the rest of the company, was staring fixedly at a skull by the side of which lay two crossed pistols.

Zlaté took off his hat, crossed his arms on his sash and bowed in token of greeting, "God be with you, gentlemen! How are you?"

"Very well, Zlaté, and yourself?" replied YakovtchétoV, looking at him ironically. Matov glanced at him with the kindly tolerant look of an experienced man of the world summing up a newcomer. The third, a beardless youth, evidently the worse for liquor, with the hallmark of Geneva stamped on his Bulgarian Bolshevism, was moving restlessly up and down the room mopping his forehead, ready with the latest catch-words that his Communist friends might require of him. He turned to Zlaté.

"You know me, Zlaté?"

"Yes, Bogine, I know you. I have seen you a good many times."

"Good. . . . You see these gentlemen? They are the heads of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Organization, and you are brought here by their orders to be asked for the last time whether you will throw in your lot with the Bulgarians or whether you are determined to remain a Serbian. The time has come for you to weigh things up and definitely choose one thing or the other."

"But I cannot be other than I am, Bogine. We have been Serbs for generations, ever since the 'old times.'"

Bogine became as excited as though a wasp had stung him, and approaching Zlaté threateningly, he ordered him to return immediately to his village and inform the people of the decisive policy of the Bulgarian Organization, upon which they would naturally ally themselves under it and request a Bulgarian school for which the Organization would provide a Bulgarian teacher; moreover, they would agree to pay taxes in aid of the Revolution.

"You say you don't want to . . . the village won't accept it? I know very well how the village feels. It is you who are at the bottom of the Serbian propaganda. It is you who pit yourself against us! But I swear by the black sign of the Organization that if you have not carried out these orders in three weeks' time I'll come and stick a bayonet through you in your own house."

"You have the power to do so, and therefore you may," replied Zlaté quietly but firmly, "but I shall never become a Bulgar." He spoke fearlessly and without hesitation like a man who has decided where his duty lies and means to abide by it, no matter what it costs him.

Furious as a tiger, Yakovtchérov was about to throw himself upon Zlaté when Matov interposed. He looked at Zlaté, his melancholy eyes full of friendliness, and motioning him to sit down he began to speak in gentle persuasive tones. With subtle arguments he tried to prove that the Brsiaks were not really Serbs but Bulgars, as they were the descendants of those who founded the Empire of Samouilo, for they must reject the band of heroes that Strézo led against the Serbian king.

"Moreover," he continued, "even if this were not actually the case there is but a very slight difference between the Serbs and the Bulgarians, and a grievous error has been committed by those who have spread the name of Serb across Macedonia, thus sowing discord amongst two peoples of the same race and setting them at each other's throats. By so doing they have put off the day of deliverance for Macedonia, for the Bulgarians are organized and already have schemes in hand for the liberation of the country, whereas small sporadic attempts are bound to fail—they are as futile as beating water. The Bulgarians are already in a position strong enough to convert the other nations to their ideas and ally them under their banner, and surely God will bring this to pass in the sacred name of 'Liberty' . . . Single-handed Bulgaria can win freedom, but not Serbia, torn and decimated by internal strife. Therefore, a convinced and loyal Serbian must realize that true patriotism lies in allying himself with the strongest side. . . ."

He said this because he had no desire to kill Zlaté and had had him brought here purposely so that he could reason with him in a friendly spirit and entreat him to give up his Serbianism, for he knew how great an influence he wielded round Porets where his courage and integrity were highly esteemed. He told Zlaté that he was not going to offer him money—as did the Serbs—for he had no need of bought men. What he wanted in the first place was simply his free consent, after which he would be nominated as Chief of all Porets and generous funds would be at his disposal in aid of the national cause.

"What more can I say to you, Zlaté?" he concluded. "We are not the sort of people who have time for pleasantries, and if after the facts and arguments I have put before you you still refuse your consent you will not live to see another sunrise. This is the firm and unalterable decision of the Bulgarian Organization, so consider it well!"

Christo Matov wiped his moist forehead with a white handkerchief and offering Zlaté a cigarette he fixed his steely gaze upon him as though to break down his resistance.

"What you propose is impossible, Sir," replied the latter quietly and steadily.

"Is that your last word?"

"Do what you will, but I shall die a Serb."

"And the gallows, dog, have you no fear of them? You want to die like a Serb! Well, you shall!" cried the young Revolutionary, taking a notebook from his pocket in order to comply with the last formalities—as though this was necessary when a man's life was about to be taken by violence. He looked round at the others as if for approval.

Just at that moment a tremendous tumult from the street made itself heard, shouts and screams and the heavy tramp of armed men. The door of the room burst open violently and a woman, soon to become a mother, appeared, crying excitedly, "Soldiers, police!"

They jumped as though a thunderbolt had fallen amongst them and, seizing the skull and cross-bones, the register and the revolvers, fled through the open door. They forgot Zlaté, who drew a deep breath of relief, crossed himself and, blessing the interruption which had saved him from torture and death, went towards the door to see what was happening. He was just in time to see the Revolutionaries hurriedly descending the well by means of a stout rope which was fastened to the wheel used for drawing water. He was wondering in astonishment how they were all going to hide down there—for the Revolutionaries were a serious menace to the Turks—and his heart suddenly filled with sympathy for these men hunted down by the common foe.

Zlaté went out into the courtyard where the woman who had warned them was standing. It was she who had lent her house to the Revolutionary plotters and she was beseeching Zlaté not to betray them when the soldiers burst in with leveled guns. On the heels of the first detachment of "nizames" came the notorious Enver-Bey de Salon, his eyes flaming like a famished wolf's, for he scented a quarry which would be worth the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel to him at Constantinople, just as he had won that of Commander by the hunting down of rebels and the pitiless persecution of the defenseless population. He had only one idea—to capture Christo Matov and his colleagues and thus become the hero of this blood-stained page of Macedonian history. With his revolver fixed on them he stopped in front of the woman and Zlaté.

"Where are the Committee, dog?" he said, addressing the woman.

"They are not here, Sir. May God grant your wife and children long life! There is no one here. . . ."

"What do you mean—no one here?" cried he in a rage, striking her so fiercely with his clenched fist that she fell to the earth. The shock of the fall brought on convulsions and the poor woman lay writhing on the ground. He placed his foot on her prostrate form, pressing her still further into the dust. "Speak, dog, or I will tear out your heart!"

"Have mercy, Sir, I swear there is no one here," begged Zlaté, overcome by pity for the woman. "Do what you will with me—kill me, hang me, but do not commit the sin of torturing this woman who is with child. Can you not see that her time is near? Mercy, in the name of the Turkish faith!"

Enver-Bey whirled round upon Zlaté, giving him a kick in the stomach which threw him to the ground by the side of the woman.

"So much for your Turkish faith," he muttered between his set teeth, and began to kick Zlaté on his head, chest and legs, accompanying the blows with a torrent of low Turkish abuse. The soldiers were searching all the rooms, ransacking the whole place, but finding no one they returned to their Chief, admitting that there were no traces of the Committee. This news revived the woman a little, and by making an effort she managed to rise. The look of tender gratitude which she gave Zlaté strengthened and encouraged him, and he too rose determined to swear that the men they were looking for were not there.

"Where in the name of Hell are they?" shouted Enver-Bey, brandishing his riding whip.

"I don't even know whom you are asking for," replied Zlaté.

"The Committee—Christo Matov, Yakovtchévov and the teacher Dobrodolov—the drunken messenger, you know them very well."

"There is no one here, Sir."

The whip whistled through the air curling round Zlaté's neck, faster and faster it whirled till a soldier, seizing his gun with both hands, struck Zlaté so violently that he almost lost his

hold on the weapon whilst Zlaté rolled in the dust. With a cry of grief and horror the woman bent over him, fearful lest they had killed him. She touched him tenderly with her lips and hands, and gently as a mother she took his poor head between her hands, lamenting over him. The Turkish commander, however, ordered his men to separate them and hold the woman until the neighboring houses had been searched.

With his drawn sword in his hand Enver-Bey advanced, followed by his bloodthirsty soldiers who were utterly hardened to scenes of this sort. Ferocious as tigers they ransacked the neighboring huts and cottages, kicking open the doors, smashing the windows and rifling chests and cupboards. In a few minutes they returned to the place where they had left Zlaté lying, followed by the cries of terrified children and the threats and curses of outraged women so overwhelmed by grief that they had lost all sense of fear.

Zlaté was lying on the ground with one arm pressed up against his chest. Blood was oozing from his nose and mouth and from cuts on his face and head. He had broken out into a cold sweat and his lacerated body felt as though hot water were being poured over it, separating flesh and bone. But his face was lit up by the wonderful smile sometimes seen on the faces of the dying. He was quite conscious of all that had happened and above all of the part he had played. The thought of it comforted him, lessening the smart of his wounds. He felt proud and thankful that at the moment of cruel temptation, when he could so easily have revenged himself on the men who had been about to hang him, he had been true to his manhood instead of acting like a traitor and a spy and delivering Christians into the hands of these Turkish assassins who would have torn them to pieces without hesitation, like hungry wolves amongst a flock of lambs. It hadn't been easy. The swaggering secretary of the Organization with his talk about hanging had so infuriated him that he had had some difficulty in restraining himself from showing the Turkish Commander the well where they were hidden. He thanked God for giving him strength to refrain from an act unworthy of a Serbian. "I will fight the Bulgarians," he told himself, "when we have got rid of the common enemy, but I

can never deliver them into the hands of the Turks. No, no, Zlaté would not betray a Christian even if he had murdered his children. Never!"

Enver's eyes were flashing with baffled rage, for the agent had been very certain when he informed him that the Committee were in this house, and there had been no chance for them to get away, since no one could have escaped through the cordon which the soldiers had made round the district. Sentries had even been stationed in the passages before the main body of troops came up. There was no doubt about it—they were there, but very well hidden. The Bulgarians were past-masters in the art of hiding, but he was not going to be fooled this time, he would stop at nothing—not even if he had to answer to the whole of Europe.

"Tell us what you know or we will put up the gallows," said he, turning to Zlaté again.

"It is all in your hands, you can do what you want, but I know nothing. . . ."

"But I know that they are here," retorted the Bey furiously.

"I know nothing, Sir, I cannot tell you anything."

"You are going to know—you shall know," cried Enver and ordered the soldiers to seize Zlaté.

The "nizames" ripped off Zlaté's cloak and bared his back whereon the heavy Caucasian whip began to trace red serpentine welts. After one terrible cry Zlaté gritted his teeth and took his punishment stoically; only the convulsive writhings of his body showed the agony he was enduring. When the soldiers had finished with him he sank down with closed eyes, his mind a blank.

They brought a chair for Enver-Bey and he sat down wearily. This man's obstinacy had tired him more than hunting down the famous rebel Gligore Sokolovitch in the Babouna Mountains. When he had recovered himself a little he signed to his men to bring the woman before him. Slowly and mournfully she approached, on her face an expression of frozen dread through which still shone scorn of her inquisitor.

"Where are they, dog?"

"There is no one here."

"I will burn down your house!"

"It is in your power."

"I will cut you in pieces!"

"It is yours to command."

"I will tear out your heart!"

"You are ruler here."

"May the devil take you!" cried Enver and called to the soldiers for the cord which they always carried.

A sergeant began to unknot the cord and then double it. He knew what his commander wanted . . . it was not the first time that he had used it to force a helpless woman to denounce the rebels. Grinning callously, he and another soldier prepared to inflict the torture. They wound the cord three times round the woman's body and then, drawing a little apart, began to pull. The woman set her teeth, her eyes began to protrude and her face grew dark. She shrieked, her legs sagged and her head fell forward.

"You will speak?"

"Mercy," she begged, "and I will tell you all."

They loosened the cord a little and a soldier came to her support.

"We will give you money too if you will only tell us where they are to be found," said Enver-Bey, thinking that at last he was to have the much-desired information.

"Devils and brutes," she gasped, "there is no one here!"

Again the soldiers tightened the cord. Her eyes bulged out still further and her legs shook as her whole weight was supported on the cord. Enver made a sign to them to place her on the ground where, almost out of her mind, she lay writhing and twisting convulsively. At this moment Zlaté staggered to his feet and was advancing on Enver-Bey with clenched fists when a soldier interposed, knocking him down with a heavy blow from the butt end of his rifle. Enver realized that he had overstepped the limit and, calling his men together, he led them off in search of the Committee in the neighboring attics and cellars. He had made up his mind to put Zlaté to the wheel if this further quest was fruitless.

Zlaté lay still, feigning death, when suddenly an extraordinary sound made him raise his head. He beheld the woman with wide distended eyes holding to her breast a new-born baby whose

tiny form was marked by the dusty ground. She was kissing him fiercely, sometimes moaning and lamenting and sometimes laughing hysterically, and in between she would burst forth into crazy snatches of song for Macedonia and liberty and fall to cursing the Turks. Her wild high laughter echoed through the courts as she thought again how she had kept her secret and beaten the Turks, then, fondling her still-born child, she rose and entered the house.

Zlaté realized what had happened. Terror and suffering had brought on the birth of her child prematurely and sent her mad. He thought almost with reverence of the poor tortured creature who had triumphed over the all-powerful Turks. He had a vision of his country doomed for so long to reëcho with the same fierce mad laughter as had shaken this courageous woman. Hot tears stung his eyes; he wept, not for this poor martyr, but for the dreadful fate of their unhappy country, thirsting insatiably for its own blood.

Zlaté got up and moved towards the door. He felt he would go mad if he stayed any longer in this accursed place. But he ran into the cordon of sentries and was forced in spite of himself to return. He approached the well with the idea of finding out how the refugees were getting on down there, but what was his horror to see only still dark water, and as the well was very deep he immediately came to the conclusion that they must all be drowned. "Perhaps," he said to himself, "they may have drowned themselves purposely rather than fall into the hands of the Turks." He shook the cord so as to move the bucket about in the water, thinking that he might bring up the body of one of the men.

Just at that moment a small door opened on the side of the well; it was about two feet above the water-level and painted in such perfect imitation of the rough stone sides of the well that detection was impossible. Matov's head appeared in the aperture. His first thought had been that the woman on being tortured had betrayed their hiding place, and that the end had come. But when he saw Zlaté bleeding and dishevelled he felt instinctively that the latter had remained staunch when confronted by the Turks as he had before the Committee—where then were the

soldiers? When he learned that they were searching the other courts nearby he told Zlaté to descend the well with all haste by means of the rope, steadying himself by clinging to the rough stone sides.

Zlaté did not hesitate. Glancing rapidly to right and left, he flung his legs over the parapet and glided down to the miraculous doorway leading into the hiding place dimly lit by a small lantern. Still panting from the exertion and excitement he related all that had happened to the woman and himself up above. Quietly and without boasting he assured them again that he would rather die than deliver them to the Turks—Serb though he was.

His story touched the hearts of the Revolutionaries. Matov was full of admiration for Zlaté's fortitude, and tears came into his eyes as he spoke enthusiastically of the woman's courage. He wept over this living proof of the greatness of the Macedonian soul—a greatness he had not recognized, for he had looked upon the Macedonians as greedy traders and had tacitly agreed when the Bulgarians referred to them contemptuously as the "Jews of the Balkans." But here was Zlaté, who, to his mind, stood as a shining example of the fine primitive type of Macedonian, and through his tears there came a ray of encouragement as he envisaged the ultimate triumph of their cause if only they might all unite under one flag and work together for the common weal.

"Ah, if only Fortune had willed that this country was not dis-united!" he cried. "I would even go further if I dared. . . ."

But Yakovtchérov was less sentimental, and holding out his hand to Zlaté, he said with a meaning look:

"There is no more need to persuade you to become a Bulgarian—your conduct has already made you one of us."

"I—a Bulgarian? Never, my good Sir!" said Zlaté quickly.

"Don't let us speak of it any more."

"Yes," replied Zlaté, "we must speak of it. We will each remain what we are. And may I have a long life!"

"Very good, but you have been baptized with fire by the Turks, and after such a stand on your part against them you cannot possibly remain a Serbian."

"Why not? May God grant you long life! Why not? I

am in your hands, but just as I refused to be a traitor a short time back I now refuse to become a Bulgarian."

Yakovtchérov was about to continue the argument when Matov, motioning him to be silent, rose and embraced Zlaté. He was filled with admiration for this extraordinary man who, while stubbornly refusing to join the Bulgarians, yet would not take sides against them when they were persecuted by the Turks. Here, indeed, was the riddle of the Balkans!

"That's all right, that's all right! Gently, gently, there's plenty of time! Though still a Serbian Zlaté is one of us," murmured Matov as though to himself, trying to pierce the veil which overshadowed the future with his far-seeing eyes.

They waited until midnight of the second day in order to give Zlaté time to rest and recoup before leaving their underground shelter by a labyrinth of passages. On the way they passed through a chamber where arms and bombs lay piled in a heap, and, selecting a pistol, Matov handed it to Zlaté, begging him to keep it as a memento.

Finally they arrived by devious ways at a second door, also opening into a well in another part of the village. Here they pulled on the cord and received the counter-sign from above. Matov said farewell to Zlaté, wishing him god-speed on his journey, and the latter hoisted himself out of the well and was immediately followed by Yakovtchérov. When they reached the surface Yakovtchérov disappeared, returning shortly with a "tchetnik" who asked Zlaté to follow him.

"You will stay to-night at Orizari," said Yakovtchérov to Zlaté, "and the next day you will reach Poretch. I shall come down to see you there—and convert you!" And he pressed his hand, chuckling gayly.

Zlaté was very ill when he arrived home and had to keep his bed a month, in fact there were those who despaired of his recovery, but his fine physique and the inspiration he derived from the thought of the "Martyr of Bitoly"—that courageous woman who had suffered by his side—helped him to pull through. Even when the fever was at its height she was never absent from his mind. He had heard a great deal about the lives of these "comitadjis" and had himself seen both the good and evil sides.

He had known both cowardly Turks and men who had sold themselves to the enemy, he had seen many a hero of the people's cause gladly sacrifice his life, but he had not expected to find in Bitoly a woman whose courageous fortitude had not been surpassed during all these days of horror in Macedonia. As he thought of what this woman had endured he longed eagerly for his own recovery—not because life was so dear to him, but on account of his ardent desire to work for the cause of national liberty.

On his recovery Zlaté called a meeting of the village, where public opinion was still undecided, and partly by cajolery and partly by threats he managed to persuade them to send a delegation to Bitoly to again ask for permission to open a school.

Finally the authorization was obtained and Zlaté opened the school, organized the village and made it part of the Poretch Union, nominated messengers, sections and district leaders, inaugurated a village strong-box for party funds and finally succeeded in prevailing upon the peasants to give hospitality to the Serbian "tchetnitzzi."

The village soon began to feel the iron hand, and before long the gossips were saying that Zlaté was receiving bribes from Bitoly—otherwise how explain his seemingly disinterested activities? The peasants began to grumble and say they would do better to remain neutral. However, Zlaté knew how to deal with them. He pointed out the pro-Bulgars, who were forced to make continual sacrifices for the cause they had espoused, and exhorted the people to join the national standard. As this admonition did not bring everybody into line Zlaté arranged with the schoolmaster to deport the ringleaders to Serbia, and after more threats—and beating a few of the malcontents—the village trembled and gave in.

But Zlaté did not stop there. He had powers over Lower Poretch, and he swore to clear that region of Bulgarian sympathizers or perish in the attempt. One day as he was on his way home from there on a lonely bit of the road he met the same young man who had led him back from Bitoly to Orizari. Instinctively Zlaté's hand went to his revolver, but the other signed to him that he had nothing to fear and told him that he came on a peaceful errand.

"Yakovtchérov sends you his greetings," said the young man, "and desires that you go to see him, or, if you prefer, he will call on you at your own house."

Zlaté was on the horns of dilemma. To journey through the forest to the house of a man who wished one no good was bad enough, but to receive him in the village at his own house, thus creating a scandal over the whole country-side, was even worse.

"Yakovtchérov desired me to ask after your health and wish you prosperity," added the young man, "and to give you his word of honor that your life will be sacred."

"Very good—if you are speaking the truth!" replied Zlaté.

"I swear it on the Cross," said the messenger, signing himself. Thereupon Zlaté said he would accompany him.

Yakovtchérov had disposed his men in a field above Slatina and posted sentries on guard. He himself, seated in the shade of a fine oak-tree, was dictating a few orders to his secretary. The rest of the "tchetnitsi" (soldiers) were lolling about on the grass, but in whatever attitude they lay each man kept his right hand on his rifle. Their swarthy faces, bare heads and tumbled hair dotted about amongst the grass made one's flesh creep, for they looked like heaps of slain after a battle. Yakovtchérov, his face expressive of vacuous self-satisfaction, was seated triumphantly in the midst of his men, puffed up with pride to feel that they were at his orders.

When Zlaté saluted him he bowed slightly in return, motioning him to sit down, and once more resumed his regal pose.

After coffee and cigarettes had been served by a soldier, who looked far more like a Syrian than a Macedonian, Yakovtchérov explained the reasons which had brought him with his band of young men. He told Zlaté that his courageous behavior at Bitoly when Enver had surrounded the place had made him famous, his name was on everybody's tongue and he was regarded as a Slav hero. . . . Christo Matov swore by him and made the sign of the Cross when he uttered his name. The great chief, Damgjan Grouev, had sent him a rifle of the latest design and Sarafov had sent him a magnificent watch. Even the Prince had heard of him and was making him a present of an autographed photograph as well as a thousand crowns. Everybody (voivodes &

tchetnitzi) was eager to congratulate him. They only waited for his consent and Yakovtchérov would hand over all the gifts.

"Young men!" said he, addressing the recumbent tchetnitzi who sprang to attention immediately, "do you know whom you have the honor to see here by my side? No? . . . I wondered. I will tell you: This is Zlaté of Slatina, the hero of the siege of Bitoly—the man who refused to betray us to the Turks! Do him honor!"

Yakovtchérov spoke pompously, imitating, as far as he was able, the Bulgarian speech. Then he rose, took his rifle and lining up his men he ordered them to march twice in front of Zlaté, saluting him as they passed. Zlaté was on the verge of bursting out laughing. Then the men withdrew, leaving the two chiefs together.

"Give me your hand, Zlaté!"

"Why, Sir?"

"Because from now on you are a Bulgarian."

"I? . . . May God forbid!"

"You are still a Serbian?"

"Just as I always have been. I cannot be anything else."

"But what shall I do with these gifts?"

"Whatever you like."

"Maybe, but I have pledged my word to the Organization."

"I did not ask you to do that, Yakovtchérov. And anyway what is the use of all this masquerade? Am I a child or a performing animal that you come to me with presents and rewards? Go and find something better to occupy your time and leave me to order my own life in Serbia where I began it. . . . There! you have my answer."

"Do you mean by that that you are against us, Zlaté?"

"Perhaps, if you do not leave me to manage my own affairs."

"You think of fighting against the Bulgarians?"

"Perhaps. . . ."

"But how can you? We are not the sort of people to be put off by words—nor shall we stop there! Don't make any mistake."

"If I am making a mistake it is I who will pay for it! All I ask of you is to leave me alone. You are worse than a plaguy

insect buzzing around! Do show a little good will!" Zlaté concluded, rather heatedly. Then he rose and, bowing to Yakovtchétoŭ, set out on his return, whilst the voivode sat still, pondering over what had just taken place.

But Yakovtchétoŭ did not leave Zlaté in peace. He had, in fact, been commissioned by the Organization to put an end to the trouble in lower Poretsch which Zlaté was fomenting, but at the same time Matov had specifically instructed him that there was to be no attack on Zlaté's life without his personal consent. These contradictory orders incensed him, and he railed against the heads of the Organization for being such fools as to ask the impossible of him—to convert Zlaté to the Bulgarian cause and to spare his life! Didn't they know him better than that? Had he not laughed at their emissary and likened him to a teasing insect? But when his anger had cooled down he began to turn over schemes for outwitting this Slatvian chief, and finally he formulated his plan.

Towards dusk one day he descended cautiously on Slatina and, approaching Zlaté's house without being seen, managed to capture Silian, Zlaté's eldest son, whom he carried off to the mountains. When Zlaté returned and found that his son had disappeared he guessed what had happened; however, he discouraged his family from making a search for him telling them that he knew where the boy was. Nor was he mistaken, for the next day a peasant from Orlanatz arrived with a note containing Yakovtchétoŭ's message that in two weeks' time, if Zlaté had not joined the Bulgarian party, he would receive his son in a sack, cut in pieces.

Zlaté told the peasant to wait, and he went off to find the schoolmaster, to whom he dictated the following reply:

"MY DEAR SIR:

I do not consider this the right moment to undertake such a matter as you suggest. In my opinion, we must first of all finish with the Turks, and after that we can settle our own scores. However, we can engage now if you so desire; and, for my part, I will send you one of the chiefs of your clan chopped in pieces in a bag. Do not imagine that I cannot do this, I know very

well that it is within my power, and do not cherish any false hopes that you will live to see me a Bulgarian. I await my son cut in pieces in a sack. Salutations!

ZLATE OF SLATINA."

Although Yakovtchérov knew Zlaté very well he had not anticipated a reply in this tenor. He had imagined that the Serbian nationalist's iron strength of purpose would not be proof against a father's heart. However, when he saw that he had made a mistake, he decided to try other tactics. With this in view he set Silian formally free and supplying him with arms he placed him amongst his ("tchetnitzi") own band of followers, where the Bulgarian influence and propaganda all around would naturally influence his young mind.

Silian was scared, and being a simple-minded boy he fell into the trap. Seeing the success of the Bulgarians manifested almost everywhere he began to think that there might be some truth in their ideas, and Yakovtchérov, watching his conversion, congratulated himself on the success of his schemes. When he considered that the right moment had arrived he took Silian aside and proposed to make him Chief of Slatina, telling him that he would be supplied with money from the party-funds for himself and his helpers in the village. Then he went on to outline his conduct towards his father and indicated the point at which he should publicly forswear his Serbianism. To all this Silian gave his consent. After this he was conducted to a little chapel nearby where, before a "pope"—and after going through a ceremony which made him tremble—he took the oath and swore to be faithful to the name of Bulgar. Then he was allowed to depart.

On his arrival home his family welcomed him joyfully. Zlaté alone retained his calm reserve, and after kissing his son he gazed at him searchingly as though he would penetrate the innermost secrets of his soul. This easy home-coming appeared to him enigmatical, and he was astonished to see that Silian had been given the same arms as the "tchetnitzi" carried—for he knew that the Bulgarian Organization did not part with them for nothing. Immediately his mind was troubled by the thought that perhaps his son had been won over to the other side and had been sent back to destroy all that he himself had taken so long to build

up. He was anxious and unhappy, but he decided to let time clear up the mystery; and it was not long in coming about.

Silian talked happily about his bondage and told of the Bulgarian forces and the way in which he had been received by Yakovtchév, not even hiding the fact that he had given him money and arms.

"They are real men, and I should be wrong not to tell you so," said he with an air that conveyed so much more than the actual words that it burned into Zlaté's heart. Finally Zlaté could contain himself no longer and, spitting with fury and disgust, he cried, "They are not men—they are savages!"

Then Silian began his underhand tactics. He was not long in finding in the village a few discontented individuals who could not support Zlaté's rule and who, scenting profit for themselves, began to coöperate with him in founding a Bulgarian organization to the detriment of his father's work, whereupon the latter redoubled his efforts. But Silian did not stop there. Even at home, in his father's absence, he began advising his mother, his brothers and uncles to abandon Zlaté's insane principles which were bringing ruin upon their family by forcing them to fight for a Serbia which did not exist in Macedonia. "He demands that we call ourselves Serbs," he continued, "although there are really none living in this country. We are Bulgars—why should we work for the Serbian cause?"

Zlaté, who was alive to all that was going on, took Silian aside.

"My son," he said, "you have been to the Monastery of Poretch, and there you saw that the kings and emperors in the sacred pictures were not Bulgarians but Serbs. There is a picture in that monastery of King Voukachine, who, you know, was the father of King Marko, one of our national heroes. He was lord of the districts of Prilep, Bitoly, Kitchévo, Poretch and Ochride, and you will remember what was written underneath the picture: 'The blessed Serbian King Voukachine, Lord of Prilep.' If this country had been Bulgarian they would have written 'Bulgarian King' and not 'Serbian King,' but it is thus in all the monasteries and churches, and I believe in them rather than in all the learned theories which have been advanced—be they Serbian or Bulgar. And since this is so I shall die a Serb

as did my father before me and all the old Serbians of Poretch. If any one belonging to me breaks away and becomes unfaithful to tradition I will curse him! Do not forget my words, son. Ponder them in your heart!"

"Yes, but words such as these do not bring in any money, father," said Silian.

"Oh! so that's it! They don't bring in any money! Is it only money that counts? Is it possible that Zlaté's son can speak thus? Shame! Is this the way to strengthen national consciousness?"

"Father, I am not a fool to get myself killed for being a Serb," he cried audaciously.

"Is your father a fool then?"

"I don't know, perhaps. . . ."

"Well then, you also shall be a fool, even as I am," cried Zlaté furiously. "As long as Zlaté lives you shall be a fool also!" And, shaking his finger at him threateningly, he turned and left him.

In accordance with a plan of Zlaté's, the Chief of the Serbian "tchetnitzi" arrived at Slatina one autumn morning with a few of his men. He seized all the leaders and malcontents, bound them and led them to the village square where all the Slatinans had been assembled with their wives and children.

The stage was set for the terrible judgment to be pronounced when Zlaté appeared pushing before him his son Silian, who was also bound with his gun hanging round his neck—muzzle downwards—as when a murderer is led before the people for judgment. On seeing the father bring his own son to be judged by the hard law of the tchetnitzi—which knew no pity—a shiver of horror ran through the crowd as it realized the gravity of the occasion and the momentous decisions about to be taken.

The voivode Dané, who had a very distinguished record as a soldier, invited the leading men and the heads of the village to take their places apart, thus forming a public tribunal which was to sit in the name of the tchetnitzi headquarters and pronounce judgment upon the delinquents. He requested the accused to explain their movements against the Serbian cause and asked them how it came about—seeing they were Serbs and not Bulgars—that they had lent themselves to this unhappy business. The

accused remained silent with bent heads, for they knew that whatever they said to justify themselves would be in vain and that their only hope of saving their heads lay in the fact that Silian was to be judged and the casting vote would lie with his father. Dané repeated the same questions several times, but as they still remained silent he asked the judges to pronounce sentence upon the traitors.

While the heads of the village were timidly exchanging glances and whispers Zlaté stood up and, approaching his son, unfastened the gun from his neck. He examined it and finding the charger empty loaded it from Silian's pouch, then—very pale—and holding the gun in both hands as though about to fire it, he addressed himself first to his son and then to the others.

"This way, traitor! . . . Judge and condemn the others as you will, but I shall pronounce judgment upon Silian after my own fashion. . . . I gave him life and I shall take it away. . . . This way, Judas!"

Zlaté's resolve was taken, for he thought that after he had killed his son with his own hands he could demand the same penalty for the others, and thus he would save his honor and his village where Bulgarianism would disappear, for the memory of this dreadful scene would never be forgotten as long as Poretsch existed.

"This way, dog!" he repeated, addressing his son.

Silian gazed at the crowd with a wild frightened look and made an effort to obey his father. But he was trembling violently and his knees gave way, and with a muffled cry he fell at his father's feet. When he saw his son act in this cowardly fashion Zlaté's rage boiled over and he took aim at him to kill him, but the crowd intervened. The voivode, Dané, himself felt that to let a father kill his son before this, an apathetic, crowd was going too far, and taking Zlaté by the arm he implored him to pardon Silian, the elders uniting with him in begging Zlaté to grant this favor.

"Don't interfere in this matter, you others, leave me alone! I gave him life. . . ."

A tumult ensued. The angry father was separated from his son, and as the latter became calmer he murmured, "The Lord is merciful when people pray unto him. . . . Silian, get up and

kiss the hand of all those present. Do it—if not you shall die!”

They led Silian round the assembly and he saluted those present, finally stopping before his father, who said, “To-day you are born again, thanks to these brave generous people. But understand this—if I see that you are not striving to be just as ‘foolish’ as your father, if you do not work for the Serbian cause, by the Lord, I will strangle you with my own hands! Now go, and do as you will.”

Then Zlaté, turning towards the Chief of the tchetnitzi and the elders, who were considering what steps to take in regard to the other delinquents, said:

“You have spared my son; it is just that I in my turn should beg you to pardon his comrades. . . .”

The others were pardoned and the “pope” sent for so that they might swear allegiance to the Serbian name and promise that henceforth they would obey Zlaté and carry out the orders of the Serbian tchetnitzi organization.

The whole village was filled with joy, for the people felt that the difficulties and temptations which had beset their path for so long had at last been cleared away and that henceforth they would follow Zlaté’s leadership. On that day the village seemed to be purified and reborn. Zlaté himself felt triumphant at having overcome this movement of discontent among the peasants, and he celebrated the occasion with a feast at his house to which all were welcome, and the people ate and drank and swore that they would follow no one but Zlaté.

Zlaté had misgivings, however, in regard to his son, who, ever since the day when he was brought up for judgment, had been very silent and shunned the society of others. Zlaté feared that Silian might be meditating some further treachery which would forever dishonor his family name, and he therefore sought to prove through himself and his family both to friends and foes that Macedonia had a national spirit for which its people should be ready to sacrifice themselves—as he had done—for he held the name of Serbia as dear as that of God and cherished it as the ideals of his own soul. It was because he felt so strongly that towards the fête of the Annunciation he sent Silian to work in Serbia under the supervision of his friends there with the request

that they would do all possible to influence the boy's mind and character for the national cause. And Silian was told that he was to remain there until his father sent for him.

Having sent his son to Serbia and assured order in the village, Zlaté sent out for Prilep on a matter of business, taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the journey to visit the district superintendent of schools at Kitchévo and discuss with him some matters of public business. As he was leaving Prilep a peasant from Lokvilna met him with news of Yakovtchétoŭ who, he said, was preparing to come and see Zlaté at the feast of the Annunciation and either convert or kill him.

"Let him come! Tell him I await him," replied Zlaté.

As he pondered over the news on his way to Kitchévo Zlaté's heart was full of anguish and suffering, like Christ's on the road to Gethsemane, overwhelmed him. He struggled against himself. . . . Life was sweet—it could not be compared to nothingness. But come what might, he must remain a Serb to his last breath, and till then it was certain that Yakovtchétoŭ would never cease to dog his footsteps. If he stayed in the village the other might come and kill him at any moment; if he asked aid of the company of "tchetnitzi" Yakovtchétoŭ might capture his second son, set fire to his house, burn the village and thus overthrow all his work; to wait for him with his gun in his hand would be futile, for he might annihilate all his family; and to leave Slatina now would be to put too severe a strain upon the uncertain loyalty of the village—all that he had been at such pains to build up might be demolished at a blow. What could he do?

Zlaté told himself that a man can only die once and perhaps his death, which would serve as an example to all Poretch, might be of real service to the cause; what was more important, it would create a deep rift between Silian and his family on the one side and the Bulgarians on the other, for such a catastrophe would have the effect of turning his family into loyal Serbians with an undying hatred for those who had killed him, and he knew that the atrocities which the Bulgarians would commit upon his body would fill the people of Slatina with horror and divide them for ever from such brutal savages. "Our 'tchetnitzi,'" he said to himself, "will seek to avenge me; a bloody struggle will begin, and on my tomb will rise the great national

monument which no storms can shake. Ah, what happiness to think of!" And he drew a deep breath as though he had rid his heart of all its anguish; then crossing himself he prayed to God to spare him any further trials and to give him strength to do what he had set himself.

The next day he bought a tall candle in Kitchévo, and, carrying it in his hand, he proceeded to the Bishop's palace. Polikarpe, the bishop, was in the ecclesiastical offices with his secretary and the school superintendent, and, seeing Zlaté pale as death walking mournfully across the court, he gave orders that he should be admitted at once.

"My lord Bishop," said Zlaté after the formal salutations were over, "I come to ask for your blessing. My days are numbered, and the number is known. . . . I beg you to say the Mass for the dead, to absolve me from my sins and to pray to God for me a sinner. I beg you to give me absolution now, for when I am dead I shall see nothing. . . . I humbly implore this of you . . ."

They were all dumbfounded, till the Bishop, pulling himself together, said:

"Come, come, Zlaté! What is all this you are saying about your death? You still look hale and strong!"

"I am strong enough," said Zlaté, "but I must die. Pardon me, my lord Bishop, and you good Sirs, do not be alarmed, but I must die."

"May God be with you! What is the matter, Zlaté?"

"Well," said Zlaté, "I would have you tell me one thing—but speak the truth as though before God and the people! Which is better: Zlaté living as a Bulgarian or dead as a Serbian—as his soul demands of him, and as his father and grandfather died before him? The time has come to choose! I have given my soul the answer as to what I must do, but I beg you also for your opinion. There are only two alternatives: either Zlaté will live and become a Bulgarian or he will die to remain a Serb. Which is more worth while?"

A profound silence followed his question.

"The other two may remain silent," continued Zlaté, "but you, holy Bishop, who are not Serbian but Greek, tell me: for

Zlaté and for his soul, what is best—to live and become a Bulgar or to die as a Serb?"

Polikarpe was visibly embarrassed and distressed, as he parried the question with:

"But what do you think yourself, Zlaté?"

"No, no," replied the latter, "it is for you to say."

"Then I say to you—Serb!" replied the bishop.

"May I always be worthy of your holy prayers!" cried Zlaté. "Let me kiss your hand." And bending down before the bishop he kissed his hand. Then he seated himself and related all that had happened. With his simple logic he showed that he had no choice but to let himself be killed. It was better that he alone should be sacrificed. He told them of the vacillation of the village, the fickleness of his own son and the reproaches which his own family brought against him. In vain his hearers urged him to have a bodyguard or to stay at Kitchévo, or to set out for Bitoly or Serbia. He refused everything, saying at last with touching simplicity:

"No, no, Zlaté dead will count for more than Zlaté living."

The Bishop's secretary, with tears in his eyes, fell on his neck and kissed him; then he went out followed by the superintendent of schools, leaving the bishop alone with Zlaté.

"I beg you, holy Bishop, if I have deserved anything of the people and done anything for religion and the Serbian cause, to say a Mass for the dead for me—as though I were already dead . . ." began Zlaté again.

The bishop realized that it was no use to try and discuss the matter further, and loyal Greek and devoted friend of Serbia as he was, this patriotism touched him deeply. He rose, took his cope and his Book and gave Zlaté a silver crucifix, and the latter, seating himself in a chair with the cross and the lighted candle held tightly in his hands, prepared to listen to the prayers of intercession for his own soul. After the confession the Bishop began to repeat the Requiescat in Pace with unutterable pathos. He felt rather than understood the beautiful calm with which Zlaté followed the Mass, and it moved him deeply. Although Zlaté's face was pale he showed no sign of fear, his features were transfigured by the far-away look of another world, like one who, conscious that he is about to die, leaves this world without regret

—it was the face of a saint. As the bishop looked at him his voice broke, and before he had finished he was in tears. His prayers were marked by a beauty and fervor they had never had before, for never had he felt God the Martyr so near and all-pervading, and he prayed for this just man, who must soon tread the stony road of Calvary bearing his heavy cross, as though in the very presence of his Lord.

"Why do you weep, holy Father?" asked Zlaté with wonderful tenderness and a look on his face not of this world. "You must not weep. When I hear the bishop praying for my soul I feel like an eagle soaring in the air, higher and higher. It is all I ask—do not weep, read the holy prayer!"

Sobs choked the bishop's utterance, and as soon as he had recited the prayers ordained he ordered the Sacrament to be brought, which he blessed and administered. On parting, when Zlaté prostrated himself before the bishop and asked for his prayers the bishop, making the sign of the cross on his forehead, bowed in his turn before this noble soul, saying:

"And you also, Zlaté, pray for us!"

On the day of the Annunciation Zlaté did not leave his house. His manner was calm and tender to all his family and the candle burnt all day as though in gratitude for some successful transaction; so that when he called his wife and handed over to her all the money he had in the house, saying it would be better in her care, she did not feel any surprise. After dinner he asked for his boots, saying that he was going to a meeting in the village, and just as he was bidding his children a loving good-by some one knocked softly on the door. He started, then seeing his daughter rise to open it, he restrained her.

"It is my call," said he. "Good night!—God bless you, and may He remember me too!" And, opening the door, he was swallowed up in the darkness.

"It is you, Bogine?" he murmured. From the shadows the voice of Yakovtchérov replied wishing him good-day in friendly fashion.

"That's all right," said Zlaté, "but we must get away from here for Dané and his 'tchetnitz' are in the neighboring houses." He was lying because he did not want anything to happen to

alarm his family. "Come, let us get out of the village," he added. They set out to walk, groping their way in the dark. As they neared the forest Yakovtchérov stopped, and, putting his hand on Zlaté's shoulder, he asked him:

"Well?"

"All is done, with the help of the Saviour I have made my resolve—though I die I will remain a Serbian. But tell Christo Matov from me that he would have done better not to kill Zlaté. Those are my last words. . . . Now, do as you will!"

"Is that all, Zlaté?"

"It is all."

"Always a Serbian?"

"Always, here on earth and up above!"

"Well, pray to God!"

"I have already prayed, it is enough," replied Zlaté.

They were standing in a clearing. The night was propitious for the execution of infernal plans—black, silent, desolate. The brutal word of command was given and under the shroud of darkness, like an orgy of devils, the men began their horrible task. Yakovtchérov withdrew a little so as not to hear Zlaté's sobbing breath and smothered groans, leaving his cruel "tchetnitzi" to their dreadful work—while around the Macedonian sky and the hills and valleys of the tortured land listened unmoved.

THE SICK MAN

By RAMON CAMBA

HE was miserable.

Sister Isabella, seated on the edge of the wooden bench, listened to him, hands folded. One could see that she was a woman who had devoted her life to religion. Stiff and erect, she bent forward over the bench where the unhappy man lay.

Her simple soul found little consolation in the usual phrases which she was accustomed to utter with her virgin lips. Her heart filled with psalms, her eyes overflowing with tears, she comforted the man.

Of what strange consistency was the sorrow of this poor unfortunate?

She was used to comforting the sick and the unfortunate, but to-day she found herself at a loss before this man who gazed steadfastly at her white sister's hood on which the dismal daylight seemed to fix, lighting up the sunless room. There was no taste of home in this dismal lodging. There was only an unpainted table and a few hooks concealed by a dirty curtain.

The doctor had said, "The crisis may last for some time. Why don't you go to the hospital?"

Sister Isabella insisted.

"I won't go. I won't go. Here I am at home. I am free. What do régime and hygiene mean to me? I want to be alone. I don't want to become a number, a thermometer chart. I am not a thing. I don't want to sleep, eat, follow a regular system of living. I don't want to think with people all around me."

"But—"

"My mother died at the hospital. I see her now. She is calling to me. She hugs me close to her. She kisses me. She was from Barcelona. She is trying to find herself in me. The visiting hour is at an end. I cross the room. I turn back. She follows me with her eyes. She wants to call me back to her."

"And then?"

"An official letter informed me that she died the next day at 2 o'clock in the morning."

"She died with the last rites?"

"It was a sick barracks where those without money died like brutes." And he added in a voice almost inaudible, "Mother died abroad."

"She was Spanish, wasn't she?" queried Sister Isabella.

"No. We are not Spanish. We are Catalan. No, I won't go to the hospital. If I must die, I want to die in my own little corner."

Sister Isabella made a sign of assent. "Try to sleep," she coaxed.

"The store where I worked as packer sent me a little money. The boys made a collection for me. I had saved a little in order to return—"

Sister Isabella interrupted him.

"As soon as Señora Gomez told me, I came at once."

"You will come often, won't you?"

"As often as I can. I am very much demanded. God made me an orphan and then taught me how to aid by prayer and acts of mercy those who suffer on this earth but who shall be the chosen ones in the world to come."

"I need you more than that. Listen, I must speak to you. I am choking with it all. Every morning Señora Gomez brings me two liters of milk. It is quite enough for me. I might even be a victim of the gout. I recognize her walk on the stairway and the noise which she makes with her broom sweeping the steps. She knocks at the door. First of all, her stomach comes in the room. She knows all the news of the day and she fills my head with it. She sings all sorts of folk songs while cleaning the stairs. I would like to be able to tell her to be quiet. I don't dare. She leaves this wretched world behind when she sings. My neighbors wake up, the wife first of all to prepare her husband's breakfast. I can always tell if they have been as husband and wife by the way they talk in the morning. The children howl as they tumble out of bed. They part their hair. This one isn't hungry. That one is late for school. It doesn't matter. They always have time and energy enough to curse me through the keyhole.

I hate children. They are afraid of the weak, those who are incapable of making themselves respected. I would like to box their ears."

"Those are hardly Christian sentiments."

"The husband complains. The wife runs to him and covers him with kisses, happy to submit, to be menially useful."

Sister Isabella protested by a shrug of the shoulders.

"Certainly, you know the infamy of human nature. My eyes have seen what I would not have believed. Nevertheless, forget—"

"But how can you expect to comfort me when you don't know the reason for my unhappiness?"

She drew back.

"But I am not a priest. I cannot receive confessions."

"Then why have you come to see me? I only want you to listen to me. I don't want any of your sermons or prayers."

Sister Isabella adjusted her hood.

"Ungrateful fellow," she said.

"Let me say a word. Look as if you were listening to me. Try to understand the tragedy which is eating out my heart."

"The ways of the Lord are mysterious. Go on."

The man sighed deeply.

"If he is in bad humor, if he has a coated tongue, he threatens her. A disgusting fellow. Then he leaves for the factory. If he has kissed her, she howls and implores him to take her to a dance. If he has beaten her, she cries. What a worthless creature is a woman! She curses the male and then seeks him out. He is stupid, selfish, ugly. She knows it. It doesn't matter. She loves him. She is eager to experience the pleasures of vengeance and sacrifice. She does not want to miss either sensation."

"Console her."

"She comes and tells me all about her troubles. Then she lies to make a better case for herself. If I blame her husband, she turns around and defends him. If I say that the husband is not to blame, she swears that she will kill him, that he is the most disgusting of men. You'd never think that she is a mother and none too young.

"She arranges my bed. She helps me to wash. Her husband has forbidden her to come to my room. She makes certain the

neighbors are not looking and then she sneaks in on tiptoe, her finger against her lips lest some one in the hall hear our conversation.

"She works as a scrubwoman in the city, but why doesn't she ever clean her own room? Her husband always finds things topsyturvy when he comes back after a day's work. He starts off on a tirade which continues until he feels better."

"He has lost the blessing of peace."

"God fixes things up well. They have taken my God and my sun away."

"If you only wanted to—"

"Upstairs there are two old people who are living on bread crumbs. The old man sits in an armchair all day long thinking how wonderful it is that he is still alive. He does not dare budge in the chair lest it break. The old woman, almost bent in two by the trials of her sad life, amuses herself by watching all the people pass by in the streets, who try to find happiness and fail.

"Over there you can see the wall of another tenement just like this one."

"I know," said Sister Isabella. "I have visited this neighborhood for more than twenty years. 'Make yourself useful,' were my instructions. You will be well taken care of. You will have no material needs except faith in the Lord. It is a job, nevertheless, which is not to be underestimated. The day will come when you will be glad to say that your work has come to an end."

"Down there there is another family of laborers. A child is born, he suckles, his teeth grow, he cries, another comes along. The mother swears that she has had enough of motherhood. It will never happen again. Her husband is a scoundrel. Then one of the youngest children cries, 'Mother.' She stoops down, takes her child in her arms, and promptly forgets all she has said. What does the future matter? She is a mother after all. The father comes in. He has stopped at the corner for a few drinks. He is facetious, disagreeable, ready to beat his wife. This cheers her up and she is ready to drink a glass or two herself. Meanwhile, the other children cower in a corner of the room, their pale wan faces reflecting the fear which they have for their father."

Sister Isabella touched her rosary.

She got up and poured out some milk in a bowl. He made a grimace and took the bowl in his hands reluctantly.

"I want to eat a dish of red peppers and a bottle of Tinto Rojo."

"You must get well first of all."

"But you have come to change my dressing. You slip in everywhere. You seem to have no human sentiments nor age. Your face is expressionless and your hands are yellow and wrinkled. You want to take off my bandages and rub my legs with that ointment. Why, my mother could not take better care of me. When I am disagreeable, you reply with the words of the Lord. I am really grateful to you."

"When you are better, that will be my reward."

"I haven't a single relative in the world. If I could only hear the language of my beloved Catalonia. The agent of the Poor Relief who comes is from Andalusia. He doesn't dare come in the room for fear of catching some germs. I haven't any germs. There are only bed bugs. Since I smell from the ointment, they have even left me alone. They are all hidden between the boards of the floor waiting for an opportunity to eat as before. From time to time one young fellow sticks out his head, smells a bit, and returns to the safety of the floor in disgust."

"We will have the floor disinfected and put new paper on the walls. Don't you worry, we'll have everything fixed up."

"Every one else in the tenement goes to work except me. You brought my bed over next to the window. I can look out in the courtyard. It's almost always pitch dark. The sun never shines there. Through the open windows I see women's hair and spider webs. I guess what is happening. The cracks in the walls are swarming with bugs. The garbage is lying all over the courtyard. No one tries to clean it up."

"God take pity on your unfortunate subjects," prayed Sister Isabella.

"For weeks I haven't seen the street with its shops and its bustle, the women's eyes and the men's footsteps. For weeks I haven't seen the sun or even the rain. For weeks I haven't seen a beautiful color. Color, why I have even forgotten what a color is. How I long for my country, where flowers grow everywhere and the trees are laden with oranges and lemons. I—"

Sister Isabella interrupted him.

"Let's open the Bible. Look here. How true it is. 'Do not pity yourself, but the suffering of those who have suffered because they believe.'"

"I am already in the grave," he replied. "It is a grave that I know well and I don't want to find another. I certainly am better off than in the store. If I had had money, I could have gone to the college. I read the stories of troubadours. I could have become a farmer and raised fruits. What strange fate sent me to an office in Madrid? Chance decided that my destiny was to class all sorts of goods in a basement."

Sister Isabella reopened the Bible and began to read. While she read, the man's mind began to wander.

His sleeves rolled up, he worked in the basement of a store which served as clearing house for the delivery of the articles chosen by the customers. His job was to make certain that they were well tied and then put them in the baskets corresponding to the labels on the packages. The telephones rang. The checkers created by their presence an unpleasant feeling of mistrust. The electric light burnt his tired eyes and his shoulders ached from constant bending over the packages.

He left the basement at two o'clock to scramble like all of the other employees for a bite of luncheon in a dingy little restaurant back of a drugstore. There for a few centimos he managed to appease his hunger. It was there he met Juanita. She smiled at him and seemed very desirable.

"Juanita," he exclaimed. "Juanita."

"I will begin a new chapter," announced Sister Isabella.

The man heard nothing except the confused voices of the past humming in his mind. They were all mixed up as were his thoughts, and strive as he would, he could not separate his ideas. Finally the vision of Juanita gained the ascendancy.

"Sister, listen to me. I must speak to you in order to have a bit of peace."

"Go on."

"Juanita said to me, 'Take me along.' She was young, gay, pretty. She put her hand in mine and kissed me."

"She is your fiancée."

"No, she lives in the same tenement, but little by little the thought of her life with me frightened her. She left me."

"Let's change the subject."

"No, you see she suggested a free *camaraderie*. The head of my section at the store has shown an interest in me. Life is short. Why not profit of everything one can, masculine stupidity included. Let's organize our happiness. We'll lead the same life, but I'll be free. I agreed. I was wrong."

"When you are well again, you must get married," counseled Sister Isabella.

"I'll only marry a Catalan, an exile like myself. We will speak our own tongue. Alas, I left my country."

"Alas," repeated Sister Isabella.

The man began to dream of his return to his beloved land.

"It is decided then."

"Yes, yes," replied his mother. "We will live in Madrid. I have gotten a good job and I have found an excellent opportunity for the boy to make a career for himself in the department store."

"Will you come back to Catalonia?"

"Who knows? My husband is dead and my cousins have no money. We will surely come back for our vacations from time to time."

"It doesn't make you sad to leave your home country?"

"Yes, but it's for the boy that I am leaving."

The boy was proud of his new suit. He dreamed of Madrid, of the joys and successes of the capital.

"We may be able to have you admitted to a sanatorium in Barcelona," interrupted Sister Isabella.

The sick man shook his head. "No! No! I won't return to my fatherland like that. I am among those who left to make their fortune in the capital. I won't let them laugh at me now and say, 'Ha, ha, I told you so.'"

"Why did your mother persist in remaining in Madrid?"

"She struggled so hard. She took in sewing and worked day and night. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'after you spend a few months in the package department, you will become a salesman, like the young Carrera.'"

"I found out how Carrera got ahead. It was because women

fell in love with him. Why? Oh, why, Sister Isabella, couldn't they love me?"

"I must be going," said Sister Isabella timidly.

"Wait! Wait!" implored the sick man. "I have not finished my story. My mother was taken sick two or three years after our arrival in Madrid. She was obliged to go to the hospital. Before leaving me, she admitted that we would have done better to have remained in our sunny Catalonia. 'My child, I thought I was acting for the best— They told me—'

"It was I who recalled to her then my brilliant future. I should soon be a salesman with polished shoes and clean collars."

"God cast aside the shadows which hid his soul. He broke into bits his sinful thoughts but He gave him peace," quoted Sister Isabella.

"That isn't true. I was so overcome by my fate that I lacked both peace of mind and ambition. I fell sick. My legs ached. Will I ever walk again? Have I deserved this dreadful destiny? Let me see the sunlight once more, let me feel the warm lips of a woman against mine. I have forgotten the meaning of love and beauty. I want to feel that I am a part of the world, that I am loved and that I love."

"You are becoming delirious again, my poor boy," said Sister Isabella.

"I used to be a good-looking fellow, well dressed and not bad-looking. I used to be able to sit in the café and enjoy the bustle of the streets. I was young and I was in love. Now I am sick and my life is near its end."

"It's time for your injection," announced Sister Isabella, and she began to prepare the syringe.

"Wait! Wait a moment!"

"But you are feverish and you are suffering."

"I am so sick, so sick."

"Be quiet."

"Quick, give me some morphine."

Sister Isabella gave the man his injection, arranged the bed. He fell asleep. Sister Isabella offered a prayer for the unfortunate man, put on her cloak, and left for the House of Mercy.

Sister Isabella walked down the stairs, taking care not to soil

her skirt. The tenement was beginning to take on its nocturnal aspect, people came and went, children cried, hammers pounded nails, the smell of onions infiltrated the air.

"The poor fellow," commiserated Sister Isabella. "He has almost made me cry."

Señora Gomez greeted her.

"Well?"

"He has been talking without end."

"Talked! Usually he is as quiet as a mouse."

"Now he's sleeping."

"He's always unhappy. You are so good to listen to his ravings."

"May God pardon us all."

Sister Isabella hurried along the street. She was late. She opened the door of the House of Mercy. She caught sight of the great hall and of the children at dinner. At the head of the table was the Mother Superior.

Sister Isabella entered.

"My mother," she said, "I will explain to you afterwards."

"Sit down and dine first."

"He is an unfortunate fellow."

The Mother Superior, far removed from the influence of men, did not understand this.

"Those are only words. Don't be led astray. Of course, he is sick. If he wasn't sick, you wouldn't be at his side. He is not in his own country, but who knows if he isn't better off. Others have known worse suffering than that. Suffering, besides, means redemption. We will make a note of his case. But is he repentant? Is he ready to confess? Will he receive the Communion? Does he belong to us?"

Sister Isabella hesitated.

"He is an unbeliever. I tried to convert him. He is very eloquent. I was distracted. There was no sun."

"At your age?"

"At his side, my mother, I forgot my age."

"And your mission. I don't understand."

"I will go back to-morrow. I will make him understand. Some seek money, others encouragement. This poor fellow only

wanted me to listen to him. To-morrow I swear I will persuade him, and the priest can come."

"Perhaps to-morrow will be too late. You should have profited of his weakness. You should have demanded his profession of faith. God helps those who believe."

"To-morrow," repeated Sister Isabella.

She received the benediction and went to her little room, where she knelt in prayer.

Twice she stopped and recommenced her prayer, which was strangely mixed with visions of flowers.

The man was delirious.

The courtyard grew silent.

Dawn approached.

The feeble light of a lamp lit up the room dimly. The morphine had lost its effect.

The world began to awake. Guided by the same impulse, the man approached the window. He carried his sheets and blanket with him. He fell. He arose. He crawled towards the window. He seized the window sill. His fingers trembled; his teeth chattered. He was in a perspiration. He had one fixed idea, "My fatherland. My fatherland."

His body turned and disappeared in the empty space.

The man was dead.

Sister Isabella, pray for him.

A DISASTROUS SPRINGTIME

By JOHAN FALKBERGET

ABOUT the end of April, in the Spring of 1809, the farmer Jens Trondsen came along on skis, his flint-lock gun swung over his shoulder, following the old skiing route of the chain of the Groenskal,—

As he reached the top the sun was rising upon the great peaks that glistened between the masses of snow. But at the very moment when he gazed upon this scene of splendor, the beauty of the spring morning had faded into a gray mist.

War had been declared. Perhaps he was looking upon those summits for the last time. Those who were destined to fall would fall. Fate would determine that.

In the long evenings, around the cottage fires, he had listened to many a tale of the old miners, of the troublous times of the long ago. . . . In their childhood they had talked with those who remembered that tragic time when the Swedes of Arnfeldt died of cold at the Lake of Esand. Men fell whom one might have expected to escape, and others came out safely who had seemed destined for death.

If the eternal law is incomprehensible, it is now, as it has been since the beginning of time: man proposes and God disposes.

Jens Trondsen had passed his thirtieth birthday and since that first Springtime, when he had come, in his seventh year to Groenskal, he had passed all his life in the mines. He had suffered much from hunger and cold and hardships—but as he saw it all perhaps for the last time, he remembered only the happy moments of his past.

Arriving quite at the summit, he stopped and regarded the white pebbles shining upon the slopes of the mountains. He knew them well, having seen them in the galleries of the mine, where they had meant nothing seen across the smoke from the torches. But now he had a desire to pick them up and caress

them in gratitude for the happy times they had passed together.

He longed to beg these stones which would rest there, year after year, shining in the sun, even to the end of time, not to forget the farmer Jens Trondsen,—he who had rescued them from the side of the black mountain. If he were destined to fall, his last wish would be only to drag himself back here to die.

What was that roaring through the air? He listened, he looked all around, saw nothing. Was it something supernatural? Was he afraid? Cowardice makes one hear all sorts of things. There it was again. It was like the tinkling of a bell, sending forth silvery notes.

He became rigid and pale with terror. An ill omen! the foreboding of death!

No, it was nothing but his neighbor, Per Jons and his daughter, coming along with a sleigh-load of moss, and it was only the sleigh-bells on Jons' horse he had heard.

Per Jons was walking beside the sleigh, holding on with one hand and with the other he held the reins.

Guri followed on skis, carrying a hay rake over her shoulder. She was a buxom lass about twenty years old, with a broad open face, and freckles under her eyes, and she swung along with the stride of a boy.

"Good morning," said Per. "So you are going across the mountains to greet the enemy."

"Good morning." Jens Trondsen cast a glance at the sun a little uneasily; he was rather afraid there might be tears in his eyes. "Oh, yes, I was just going up to see if the enemy is still alive."

He could not trust himself to speak further,—before the setting of the sun he might be in the next world. The enemy was difficult to kill and Swedish lead bit fiercely. The activities of Lieutenant General Sparr had not yet been forgotten in the country.

"You have been gathering moss," he said with an effort.

"We have decided to bring the beasts to the high pasture this year," said Per with a sigh, and the expression of his face showed his concern for the future.

"The summers are cooler and the winters longer up here. I re-

member hearing my grandfather tell stories of how people lived by trapping animals,—the elk and the reindeer in their dens. In those days the summers were so hot that the broth boiled by itself in the wooden pot.” He sighed deeply. “These perpetual wars! Our Ola went up to Skaloeren yesterday. We spent the night melting up cannon-balls. It was sinister work, but it will be still worse to fire them.”

Jens kept silent, casting furtive glances in the direction of Guri. She glanced at neither one nor the other, but kept twisting the rake on her shoulder, gazing off over the valley. What was she thinking of at that moment?

Jens wanted to say a few words of farewell; it was perhaps the last time they might ever see one another,—and it would be a great comfort to know she was thinking of him when he lay dying on the field of battle.

Per Jons gave the signal to continue on their way, as the snow was obscuring the sun.

“God watch over us all.” He shook hands with Jens, took up the reins and started off.

Guri tried to move her skis forwards, then backwards, but it seemed as if she could not stir.

“Are they entangled?” he asked hurriedly.

He was in mortal terror that she would get away before he could speak with her.

“Yes,” she said. “It is the sun. You know the Spring is well advanced. Everything in the valley is green, so the King’s men told us last night, as they passed by.”

“How many were there?”

“Mother counted twelve four times, and there were two over—for you know she can only count up to twelve—that is as far as she knows.”

Then he said: “I must join them at Svartkjoenna.”

Away off in the distance on the ridge, he could see a number of skiers with guns. It was the men from the mines who were to join up to-night at Svartkjoenna. He must make haste to join them, or he might be flogged.

“Guri,” he cried, “if I should come back alive, will you go with me to the church?”

"Yes, I can always go to church with you. You are not a pillory, are you?"

She knew well enough what he wanted to say, but she did not intend to consent forthwith. She meant to resist a little, he must ask her again. Nevertheless Jens was exactly the farmer she desired. She knew no better. And then he earned big wages in the mines, so they said. He worked as hard as any two, and whoever followed him to the church would never die of hunger.

"You are making fun of me, Guri."

"Really?"

"Yes, you are."

He was vexed. He certainly did not intend to stay and entreat Guri. Soldiers of the King did not make themselves as cheap as that.

The skiers on the hill halted, calling out to Jens Trondsen. He answered back: "I am coming." Then he said to Guri: "Well then, good-by, Guri!"

He held out his hand. She gave him hers—slowly, scarcely touching Jens' hand.

And Jens Trondsen was gone, but Guri stood glued to the spot, dumbly looking after him. He was already far away on the ridge. She repented now bitterly that she had not said "Yes" once and for all. They might have been engaged by the Autumn and it was not every one who got a farmer.—What folly to play with her future!—She felt inclined to throw herself down on the ground and cry aloud.

And in fact that is exactly what happened. No sooner had she descended the hill than she threw herself down full length on a bed of bracken and wept bitterly. No one could tell whether Jens would return alive from the war, and if he did perhaps he would propose to some one else. She knew many who would say "Yes" to Jens almost before he had finished asking them. She cried as if some one had flogged her. Through her sobs she could hear the tinkling of the horses' bells far away in the valley.

Her father called:

"Guri, are you following along behind?"

"Yes, I am coming."

She wiped her face with her apron and ran wildly down the

hill, through bushes and over stones. It made no difference to her now whether she killed herself.

It was Thursday morning. . . .

The following night, about four o'clock, just before dawn, the Norwegian skiers encountered the enemy. A hot fight ensued and lasted until the sun was high over Storsylen.

The Swedes ceased firing suddenly and the Norwegian Clarions announced from the hills that the enemy was retiring.

The Norwegian skiers set off in hot pursuit—not all of them. There were two who could not move: Jens Trondsen and Ola Jons lay on the field.

Jens tried several times to raise himself, but he became dizzy and each time he fell back like a new-born deer. He felt an acute sharp pain in his left thigh, and his boot was full of blood. Surely he was bleeding to death!

No, he would not die there on the mountain. He wanted to live! He must live! With all his strength he took off his belt and bound it tightly around his leg. Then he lay back motionless on the snow, that the bleeding might stop.

Yes, indeed, Swedish lead did bite just as deeply as in the long ago! In the excitement of the fight he had felt nothing when the bullet struck him.

How he hoped that he too had killed some one. No, no, he thrust aside such wicked thoughts. God grant that he had missed every time. He could not die an assassin—strange that he had not thought of that before. His one idea had been to kill as many of the enemy as possible. But was that the teaching of Christ?

No! No!—Love your enemies, Christ had written. Love them as brothers.

He joined his hands and said an "Our Father."

Then he felt at ease.

The sun shone brilliantly and warm. The heavens above him were clear and azure.

Cautiously he tried to move—the bleeding had stopped. Was this a miracle of God? He could move his foot. He was cold and faint but not altogether benumbed. Was it ordained that he would live?—He would live certainly, if God willed it, no matter how many Swedish bullets were left in his body. He knew

several old farmers who worked in the fields with bullets in their thighs.

Suddenly he recollected having seen Ola lying near a stone. Could he be dead?

He would try to drag himself along and find him, bind up his wounds and save his life.

Jens took his gun and crawled over the heavy snow.

"Hello, Ola, are you alive?"

"Yes," replied Ola without moving.

"Are you wounded?"

"Yes," was the feeble reply.

Jens crawled along again, dragging his gun after him. The bandage on his leg must be holding well for there was no more blood to be seen on the snow. He was happy. Perhaps after all, he would live—and who could tell—he might see Guri again—and be a farmer again on the fields near the mines. What joy! What a blessing from God!

Now he found himself very near Ola Jons.

"Are you badly hurt, Ola?"

But this time he received no response from Ola, who lay with his head resting upon his arm as if he had fallen asleep.

"Are you sleeping, Ola?"

"Yes, I am so tired."

"Where are you wounded, in the chest?"

"Yes, let me sleep, Jens."

"Aren't you cold?"

"No." He shook his head.

Jens sat down beside him. He knew it was impossible to try and bind up a wound in the chest. He knew he was helpless in a case of this kind. Jens and Ola sat there hour after hour, side by side.

The snow was melting around them. The bare patches on the mountains grew larger,—the bracken glistened. The glaciers on the slope shone in the sunshine,—Spring had come.

But when later on in the evening the mountains became enveloped in the blue haze, and the air became fresher and cooler—Ola's life had ebbed away.

Jens called him several times by name. He shook him, but

there was no answer. He lay with his gaze fixed, his eyes turned towards the east in the direction of Skaldoerene.

Jens held up a finger before his eyes—but there was not the slightest movement on his face. He was dead. . . .

Folding his arms in the sign of the cross, Jens closed Ola's eyes for the long, long sleep.

During the weary hours Jens sat there in the snow—watching for some one to come but no one could be seen anywhere. He was very cold; a mountain partridge came and alighted an instant upon Ola's breast. As she sat there her black eyes swept the vast expanse around. She pecked several times at the brass buttons of his uniform—stopped—listened and began again. It might be frozen dandelion! Then she heard something—the breathing of a living being beside her. She quickly took flight, so low that the tips of her wings almost touched Ola's rigid face.

Night descended, and the air grew chill, the shadows crept up, but still Jens sat there. Daylight fled away as if it too was frightened.

He was so cold! If he too could only fly away, but his foot was stiff and would not carry him.

The night was not dark, only full of shadows—a short spring-time night, but cold.

To Jens Trondsen it seemed like a cold winter night. He was frigid with cold. His teeth chattered. From time to time he cried out—perchance some one would pass near enough to hear him. But his throat seemed to close up as if he were afraid of waking Ola.

He imagined now that there was a third person,—one whom he could not see—but whom he sensed to be near him. He fell into a heavy sleep,—he was no longer cold—even warm. The springtime was in the air, he thought, as his eyelids grew heavier and his head fell forward on his chest.

Across his drowsy consciousness the cry of several partridges filtered as they flew by. It gave him confidence, comforted him, and, too, his agony had abated. Ola slept, doubtless,—Ola must be weary.

Jens sensed that the sun had risen. He rubbed his eyes and looked about for his cap. It was not to be seen anywhere.

About four o'clock in the morning Per Jons was driving his sled up the mountain. He wanted to take advantage of the favorable state of the snow. For weeks past his cattle had had nothing to eat but soft twigs and moss. Unless the spring came quickly he would be compelled to kill them. And then how was he to live after that? Once the animals were dead only the same route would be open to him.

"Hunger is a sword," he said to Guri, who was sitting in the back of the sled.

"War is harder still, father."

He reflected a long time on these thoughts. War and hunger—it was a double-headed sword.

Guri began to cry. She was sorrowing for Jens Trondsen. Well she might weep for Jens! He was the farmer who earned by far the highest wages in the mine fields. She would indeed be lacking in feeling if she did not weep for him day and night.

Jens Trondsen, stretched upon the snow, had heard for a long time mingled with his dreams, the tinkling and singing of sleigh bells,—but he could not rouse himself. He tried to cry out, but he could not.—He sensed, notwithstanding his drowsiness, that day had dawned.

If he could only wake up! He was so sleepy. It weighed upon him like a flag-stone upon his body. He tried to twist himself, to throw out his arms. He called! He shouted!

There! The weight was slipping off! He was awake.

"Hello!"

"Hello!" replied Per Jons! He jumped from the sled and listened.

"Some one is over there," he said to Guri. She listened also.

"There," said Per, pointing his finger in the direction.

"Hold the reins, Guri," and he started off running.

He found Jens and Ola stretched out side by side. The snow around them was red with blood.

"Are you sleeping?" asked Per.

"Yes, Ola is asleep."

Per knelt down beside his son and gazed into his eyes.

"He sleeps in the name of Jesus." He did not weep nor complain. He rested his hands upon those of his son,

"Yes, let us hope he sleeps in the name of Jesus, and it would be the best sleep for all of us."

"Yes!" replied Per. "Yes, yes."

He beckoned to Guri to drive the horse nearer, but when they had placed the body upon the sled he said: "Ola cannot suffer any more with hunger. No one knows what is in store for the rest of us, however."

Then Guri helped her father to lift Jens into the sled. He had become so benumbed he could not feel them touching him.

Per Jons drove them to the mine fields. The two carried Jens into a cottage.—They built a fire and heated water, and made a great effort to save him.—He only wanted to sleep.

The following night they brought Ola home.

Per Jons, sitting in front gazing into space, let the horse go as he wished down the mountain slope. He was hungry and shivering with cold in his old patched clothing, but it was not from hunger nor cold he suffered the most!—That God, in his mercy, might have pity upon this sorrowing old man and relieve his agony!

Jens and Guri remained in the cabin until the snow had melted and the flowers grew again upon the slopes of the mountains.

During the days of the springtime Guri led Jens through the mountain meadows. He limped beside her with a Swedish bullet in his thigh. But as Spring turned into Summer he sat upon the sun-warmed rocks for hours at a time and felt life revive again within him.

"When peace is declared," thought Guri, "and he can work again in the fields, Jens Trondsen will take his place anew in the front ranks, among the workers."

Guri trapped hare and partridge. They ate meat every day, but longed avidly for bread,—but these were troublous times. They gave thanks to God that they had not died of hunger.

Best of all, they were together, and their happiness grew day by day. Even if it was but the happiness of the poor, they would not exchange it nor belittle its worth.

Some day Peace would come—and with it bread,—daily. What mattered it then if they had been hungry in the past? Not the slightest!

Every day, asking for God's blessing, Guri gathered fresh juniper and spread it on the floor of the cabin. Warmed by the sun's rays by day and reflecting the glow of the fire in the evening, the little cabin on the mountainside was turned into a Castle. In looking forward and laying their plans for the future nothing but good remained out of the chaos and hardships of the past.

THE SHARK

By GIUSEPPINA FERIOLI

CANDIDA, the daughter of the beautiful Glory d'Arco, came out of the wooden shelter and walked towards the sea. Her mother, who was reclining on a *chaise longue* protected from the rays of the sun by a lilac umbrella, hailed her daughter and demanded:

"Who wrote you?"

"Gino."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing."

Candida emphasized her reply by a shrug of her shoulders. She pursued her path towards the sea. She hesitated for a moment as she approached the point where the waves met the yielding sands. She took the letter in her fingers, tore it up into little morsels and then slowly opened her palms so as to permit the wind to scatter them far and wide. The setting sun cast a dim glow upon the sea. The little bits of paper struggled to maintain themselves in the wind, but little by little they fell into the gleaming water, burying their contents in profound mystery.

Candida leaped aside in order to avoid an intrepid wave. Outside in the harbor many ships could be seen, but around Candida no one else seemed inclined to go bathing.

"You will catch cold."

The warning was wafted to her ears from afar and so indistinctly that she did not feel obliged to admit having heard it. Soon, she heard the sound of some one approaching and, her reluctance vanquished, she plunged into the transparent covering of mother of pearls.

She swam lying on her side, scarcely moving her arms and pushing her legs forcefully against the waves as if she wished to hide herself in their foam. Soon the little red handkerchief which she had tied around her head appeared like a pencil point from the

shore, a ruby in the vast conch of the sea formed by the horizon and the earth.

The beautiful Glory d'Arco did not bother herself to follow the course of the swimmer. A young fellow squatting at her feet seemed to be saying things to her, far too interesting.

Suddenly, Glory thought of her daughter.

"Sebastiano," she cried.

A man of fifty odd years came towards her.

"Look out for Candida."

The injunction was quite useless for it was he who had cried a warning to Candida and he had not let her out of his sight for a moment.

The mother and daughter were physically and morally opposites despite their twenty years of life together. One was dark, the other blond, one joyful by nature, the other sober and reserved.

Glory was separated from her husband who might or might not have been called D'Arco. It might have been her name before her marriage. At any rate, Candida was not inscribed at the city hall under this name either as that of her father or mother. The two women led a luxurious life in their apartment where they used to receive more frequently men than women. The latter were always well dressed and never spoke of their dressmaker and of their shoemaker but invariably of their husbands and children. Glory d'Arco's flat was one where you always had a good time, where the ladies strove to adapt their conversation to the interests of the gentlemen, the sort of a place a man left with difficulty to go to his club or fraternity. The feminine society was not one of dilettantes in the art of flirting but rather of professionals. Conscious of their own powers, they used them to even better advantage.

Glory herself had arrived at that point in life that she could really see without exaggeration that she had forgotten her early youth. Sometimes she was obliged to recall it but at these moments, she seemed to see the specter of another person. She was certainly not the working girl who arrived at work every morning at seven, that innocent lamb whose one thought was to please the proprietor of the factory in which she was employed.

One day, a rich man had stopped to chat with her on the street. She had never returned to the factory. The new-found freedom was not all that it might have been, for her joy lasted only as long as the man's passion. At that time, her name was perhaps Giusseppina, Rosa, Maria, or Gina. She found herself on her own once more but this time with a baby girl. In order to atone for her sin she christened her Candida. After this, she made every sacrifice to bring up in honor and health this little creature of the puritan name. Perhaps before the Celestial Judge, the sins of the modern Magdalene will be deemed worthy of forgiveness. In any case, it is no easy matter to feign love. She kept up her spirits only because of the thought of the little Candida. Her trials meant little to her. Her courage remained indomitable. She would and she must create the means for happiness for her daughter.

Candida closed the lids of her eyes which had taken on the color of the water. The waves had caressed her cheeks, and her complexion was as ruddy as if it were covered with rouge. Her hair was clustered in a huge golden knot at the back of her neck for she scorned the bobbed hair of her generation.

She was a clever girl but obstinate. Morally as well as physically, she recognized no power except her own will. Moreover, her will was often capricious, due to her heredity and education. Strange passions pursued her. These she preferred to hide under the frigid mask of the well-bred young lady. Even her sincerity however was only a pretense which led her to excesses. To speak frankly to people whom one doesn't like even at the risk of offending them, does not constitute a proof of sincerity. She was often sorry for her actions but because of a curious kind of superstition. Candida was not kind hearted. It was simply a repentance dictated by the fear of paying the consequences of the wrong which she had done.

She learned at a rather young age the story of her mother's life and she suffered more from this knowledge because of herself than because of her mother. It seemed to her better taste to consider the affair in this light—to reap the fruits of her mother's sacrifices without any obligation to repay the latter for her struggles.

Love might have awakened her to a true realization of her duty but—How? How could one expect much from the daughter of a father who had coolly calculated the results of what for him was a trifling flirtation?

Gino's letter had disappeared, swallowed up in the mysterious depths of the sea. Candida pictured to herself again the fine, well-balanced handwriting, the carefully calculated phrases.

"I do not want to offend you, Candida," read the letter, "nor have you think I have been so stupid as to form definite plans. And, moreover, why should you attach any importance to my plans? It is like the little girl who stopped on her way to school to watch the geese because she did not know her lesson. Can you attach yourself to the home, you, free bird of paradise, who have the heavens and the pleasures of the gods?"

"Geese," cried the child. Yes, Candida understood the scruples which had dictated this letter. There was a struggle between the daughter of the mother and father.

Definite plans. Well, then.

Should she break open the door of the home? Would to God!

But Gino did not even believe that she would hesitate.

Candida alone realized the depth of this wrong.

Her pride suffered. She saw before her a Gino trying frankly to settle a question which was disagreeable for Candida. It made her tremble.

Her eyes closed; the proud and obstinate girl sobbed quietly and thought. Through the dim veil of her tears, her half-closed eyes caught sight of the huge form of Sebastiano on the beach.

He had offered to her—daughter of Glory d'Arco—marriage. But could that marriage have lasted with almost forty years of difference between husband and wife? Gino would have smiled ironically and at this thought Candida's heart gave a leap.

To accept would be a good revenge. It would assure her future. But was it necessary for her, so beautiful, so young, so fresh? Public opinion would condemn her harshly.

Suddenly, from the beach, there resounded the cries of several people, almost a call for help. Candida glanced around, then turned her course.

Not far from her, she saw a huge round body leap out of the

water and then disappear again, then the action was repeated a second and a third time. On the shore, she heard the warning, "The sharks! The sharks!" As the sharks reappeared for a fourth time, she moved away from them, her heart beating madly. It made her think of the time when she had first seen the sharks. She was only a child. A bather, a handsome young fellow, told her that the sharks didn't ever mean to harm any one. On the contrary, they stopped the storms on sea. Candida told her mother about this explanation. A friend of the latter's heard the story and exclaimed, "That's the limit! The sharks as life-savers, playing with their prey." From that time, Candida had considered the sharks as impostors and the bather as well.

The cry on the beach had not come from far away, and looking, Candida saw a row boat detached from its mooring. In the boat were two bathers and a man fully dressed. It was Sebastiano. Involuntarily, Candida thought ironically, "Sharks."

Stretched out on the warm sand, Candida received congratulations on her narrow escape. "Let me rest a bit," she sighed.

Nevertheless, her mother hurried on to the hotel where her devoted young admirer awaited her. Sebastiano was also there.

Candida took up again the train of her thoughts interrupted by the sharks. Her thoughts had been scattered as if by a shark. The real shark was on the veranda of the hotel waiting patiently for her.

"The right shark," whispered a voice inside Candida, very much like that of Gino.

The girl sat up suddenly. She felt even more lost than when she had been in the ocean a few moments before. Her life was, indeed, a shipwreck. The shark had perhaps saved her.

Inside the shelter, Candida, daughter of Glory d'Arco, took off her dressing gown, her long golden hair draped down her graceful back. Candida looked at herself and was pleased with the result of her inspection. She took hold of a little mirror to make sure of her first impression.

Dressed in white, with a blue belt around the waist and a blue ribbon around her neck, Candida stepped out of the shelter and

walked about without showing herself on the veranda. One of the most daring of the young men hanging about admired her without daring to address her. She went directly to the telegraph office to send a wire to Gino.

And the shark vainly waited for her.

JOHN'S EXTRAORDINARY METAMORPHOSIS

By PIERRE GIRARD

I

FROM within the oak-paneled office of John S. S., director of John S. S. & Co., bankers, no one would have realized that outside it was autumn. There were no fallen elm leaves on the carpet. All that one knew of autumn inside there was that it passed quickly. No doubt it would have been possible to telephone to the country and enquire whether the willows were turning yellow and the autumn crocuses in flower, but the frosted windows shut out all view of the sky, and if Pomona had visited the bank the page-boy who guarded the door would not have allowed her to get as far as the director's office.

It was 8.20. The man who opened the correspondence was slitting the 500th envelope. The noise of the typewriters was continuous and none of the typists had found time yet to stop and powder. Mournful-looking clerks with drooping mustaches were crossing the various rooms, distributing baskets of correspondence. A sub-director was opening the envelope of a Tokyo telegram, noting only the figures with never a thought for the enormous chrysanthemums it might have suggested. The stamps shriveled up. There was a telephone call from Hamburg, but it called up no picture of the North Sea any more than another from Paris suggested the stately trees of the Cours la Reine—it was merely in regard to the Royal Dutch.

At this moment the director arrived, neat and well groomed. No autumn leaves, no falling petals of a flower, could affect him. He climbed the marble staircase, passed through eleven frosted doors, put his walking-stick in the stand and entered his private office.

He was a man of thirty-two with hazel eyes. He asked for Amsterdam, and a few minutes later he heard all the noise that

was going on in the general manager's office at the Dutch bank. Unaccountable sounds they were, too, that day,—like the steaming of a Dutch kettle and the grinding of a coffee mill. After that John telephoned Madrid, and could hear nothing. It was as though Madrid were buried under a blanket of snow. He then made an entry in a numbered note-book, No. A.XXXVIII, and a visitor was announced.

John had been married and divorced. He had had very little time to think of his wife during their married life, and afterwards none at all. It was only at the lawyer's that he had noticed what beautiful hands she had. But it was too late then. Her hand was already signing the documents. To his friends John sometimes explained that the whole affair was a bit of bad luck—his marriage had coincided with the Hungarian $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan and his divorce with the $7\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. Portuguese.

The morning wore away. John remained seated before his great desk, awaiting the Exchange Rate from New York; it was like awaiting the firing of a gun. For a fleeting instant he thought of his colleagues, of Bleichroder, Rothschild and Dreyfus, all equally nervous with himself at this moment. He saw these bankers seated at their desks, lost to sight in the great cities, which were themselves hidden from view by the nut and cherry forests of Europe. Other bankers were hidden by the willows! He saw Simon through the sycamores and Welin in the Cornelian trees.

Such ideas were absurd, but ever since he woke that morning he had been troubled with these extraordinary fancies.

Seated in his Hispano-Suiza, had not his mind turned suddenly to the Punic wars? . . .

However, the rates from Wall Street came through, and John entered up in his numbered note-book S.XI, a gain of 20,000 francs.

II

The same day at 7 o'clock in the evening John left the bank. He had dictated a long report to his stenographers, strangely

troubled as he dictated by some confused and persistent idea. As inexplicable an idea as he had ever had. It was impossible to define it. There was a vague suggestion of mist about it, a smell of tar, and, whilst knowing nothing about it, it was impossible to deny that it had something to do with Italy, a definite connection with Rome, or one might as well have said with the Trocadero or certain districts of London near the Thames. It had some connection also with old musical instruments and ancient scores. John shrugged his shoulders, a little bit nervous. He looked at his reflection in the little mirror inside the car, and was reassured by the sight of himself in his silk hat and white gloves, with a camellia in his buttonhole.

"Evohé!" he murmured.

He was not in the habit of saying "evohé." In fact he was not quite sure as to its exact meaning. Was it the cry of Pan as the bacchantes followed him? Pan, who had played the lyre so much better than Diana that as a punishment he was changed into Narcissus?

The car came to a stand-still. John had reached home. He ascended the steps of the portico, rang for his valet, then sent him away without giving him any order, and stood alone, his hat still on his head, in his enormous bedroom.

"It's nonsense," he exclaimed.

He looked uncomfortably round at the Directoire furniture and the Hogarth engravings, and suddenly, against the wall between the Maréchal Ney armchair and the Francis Jourdain table, the confused idea took shape. As at a cinema one sees dream creations and memories vaguely pictured, so John visualized the face of an olive-skinned girl with short dark curls, and instantly remembered having seen her for a moment in the underground the day before, then an African soldier had hidden her from view. All this uneasiness then arose from his momentary encounter with this girl. He had not thought of it again all day, but it was impossible to doubt it since as soon as he again saw this face, a trifle aquiline, the mouth a little on the large side, all his malaise disappeared. John felt in the best of spirits at once. Dinner was announced, and he found it quite difficult to keep a serious face under the butler's eyes. He had a mad desire to perform acro-

batic tricks with the decanter of port, he even wanted to sing some of the songs from Faust at the top of his voice. And, whilst the butler was serving the fish, John seized the opportunity when his back was turned to make faces like a schoolboy. He was discovered, however, imitating a little hunchback, and had to pretend gravely that he was suffering from rheumatism. Later when the strawberry ice was served he began to laugh uncontrollably, almost choking and unable to sit still on his chair, and then felt furious with himself. Just a silly girl, after all! He detested her. She had thrown a spell over him. . . . That made him laugh still more. The butler, highly indignant, left the room. Then John was free to jump on the table and kick the oranges all over the room.

Later he picked up the fruit and put it back on the dish, and, gazing out of the window, he finished the port left in the decanter at a gulp.

It was John's custom to dress about 9 o'clock every evening and go across to see Clarice, his mistress, who lived in a house very near his own. But that evening he did not make his usual visit. No one ever knew (except a chemist in Amsterdam much later on) that he passed the evening in his dress clothes seated in the branches of a great cedar lulled gently by the wind gazing at the stars of the autumn night and the lights of the city.

III

The next morning he awoke at daybreak. He ran to his window. Dawn was painting the sky! He had never seen it before. He gazed at the street as a child, taken for the first time to the theater, gazes at the stage. For a moment a blue haze blotted out everything, then the first window caught the azure tint, which was again reflected in the puddles of the roadway, then for a while everything was bathed in rose-colored light, and long afterwards came the day. He gave the sun a cheer. One could not miss the chariot of Apollo with its four horses, prancing and rearing and then gliding silently away. John was standing by the window in his black silk pyjamas. The orange-colored houses stood out from the dark shadows like fire-balloons. Smoke was rising. Slowly the heavy rubbish-carts were finishing their rounds.

Trees came into being touched by the golden light of day. John heard the murmur of the fountains. . . .

He dressed with his usual care. But after breakfast, when the car as usual had pulled up silently before the steps of the hall-door at one minute to eight, John told his chauffeur to go back to the garage. He had decided not to go to the bank. He telephoned his assistant director. . . . Yes, just a bit tired . . . had been overdoing things . . . must take it easy for a day or two. . . . As to the Cartel loan with reference to the Belgian mines, the sub-director must act as he thought best. . . . Should he ask Stockholm to extend the guarantee for the leather stock another month? . . . Oh, yes, certainly. . . .

John hung up the receiver and hurried into his library to browse amongst the French classics, new to him, for he had forgotten all about them after taking his degree. Since then he had only read one novel, "Vierge et Martyre" (he had forgotten the name of the author) and a short treatise on the diseases of the vine (he could not recall the exact title) written by Dr. Roger-Casimir Vabien. He opened Montesquieu, and felt his charm from the first phrase. One felt the opening sentences had been written in the spring-time when the wisteria was bursting into flower and the scythes were being sharpened in the barns where they had been rusting all the winter. Everything that Montesquieu did not put down in so many words but which he knew so well how to make his readers feel, John felt and saw. A hundred French spring-times blossomed in the beauty of his descriptions, one felt as though one were walking down the long graveled pathways of old-world gardens with their box borders and trim lawns. . . . The sun came pouring into the library where John was never to be found between ten and eleven in the morning. This morning, however, he knew nothing of what was going on in London and Marseilles, nothing as to the figures reached on the Frankfort and Copenhagen Exchanges, but he did know all about the pools of light and shade made by the sun on the parquet and the pattern that the lime tree with its falling leaves was tracing on the Empire couch, and all that Montesquieu suggests when one knows how to read him and can see lilies and lavender held in bare arms bending over a fountain which reflects the sky.

By mid-day John had read seven pages of Montesquieu, but

that was quite enough for a banker to grasp the essence of French genius. From now on the Louvre, Versailles and the Luxembourg were open to him. From now on Poussin and Corneille took life for him and became realities. From time to time, raising his eyes, John had seen, against the green curtains of the great book-cases, the face of the unknown girl, each time clearer and more detailed. He could now distinguish the imitation pearl ear-rings, her little mauve hat, and the mole on her neck. And each time he had a feeling within himself that he was getting a step nearer to the 17th century, which was leading him to Louis XIV and Superintendent Fouquet. The moment when he discovered she had dark brown eye-lashes also revealed to him the Grand Condé. All his knowledge of French history which had lain dormant within him came to life. Without being aware of it, he knew it all. Unknown to himself, whilst busy over stocks and shares and underlining the exchange rates of Corocoro in blue pencil, the whole history of Pascal, the Jansenists and the Jesuits was written on his sub-conscious mind. And at the same time a thousand thoughts, buried since his childhood, came to the surface again here in the library where the sun was slowly tracing a big mark of interrogation. . . . The grief he had felt, when at the age of seven he had lost his little dog Bill, all came back to him now. And all that nervousness when he was about eleven or twelve was due, he discovered now, not to the fear of death or to the attraction which Mariette, the chambermaid, had had for him, but because Molière had died so young. This morning all John's past came back to him, he re-lived his childhood, he understood his enthusiasm of June 7th for the Wright Brothers who had succeeded in flying for an hour, and also his ardent desire on December 8th at the gymnasium to set out for India.

A servant came to announce lunch. John rose and went through to the dining-room. Edward, the butler, was still in a bad temper, but he became a good deal worse when he saw his master half-fill the glasses and try to play an air from the *Postillion de Longjumeau*. Why shouldn't he? The sky was so blue, the sun so gorgeous, the October weather so delightful, and the chestnuts at the British Embassy so lovely!

Edward listened because John was speaking aloud. He was drinking out of the bottle and wiping his mouth on his sleeve.

Edward listened without uttering a word, his lips compressed. His master was talking about buying himself a blue overcoat, a flowered waistcoat and a guitar. His master decided to wait at all the under-ground stations until he met the girl again. When he brought the coffee his master seized the coffee-pot and gulped it down,—but after all there is such a thing as justice,—and he scalded himself and made a tremendous fuss.

That afternoon John went out without a hat, his volume of Montesquieu in his pocket. He went for a stroll in the Luxembourg gardens.

This was the hour at which his mail, carefully typed, was brought to him in light willow baskets, when he received the closing rate of exchange quotations from all over England, when his three sub-directors, his head-accountant and the chief of the correspondence department all met in the director's office for a short conference. John, leaning one arm on his oak desk, looked at them through his tortoise-shell glasses and gave his orders. Sometimes he called for some one on the telephone, and a minute later from the depths of the Bank a big man would appear stammering or a slight girl shaking with nervousness. The clerks turned the handles of the adding-machines as though they were lotteries, and the rate of the Swiss franc at Constantinople was disclosed.

John laughed, thinking of all that. For in reality mail-time and the New York closing was merely the children's tea-time. It was also the hour when the statue of the handsome archer, his lengthening shadow beside him, was bathed from head to foot in sunshine. It was the time when women dropped their books and, leaning back on the seats, surrendered themselves to the caressing warmth of the sun. Above St. Sulpice tiny white clouds were sailing bravely. The Queens of France graciously permitted themselves to be caressed by the gloved hands of the architects. The rue Soufflot was crowded with old botanists in skull-caps, debonair geographical students wearing their trousers in the military fashion, tightly strapped down, and etymologists in panamas. The last autumn roses were attracting all the young negresses who were followed by the sub-lieutenants. The caretaker was already beginning his round in search of lost objects, sure of finding, as happened every day, innumerable hoops, little spades, copies of La

Garçonne and the letter on mauve note-paper, without address and perfumed with origan, which the Polish countess had left forgotten on a bench.

John was standing on the meridian, with the College of France spread out on either side like unequal wings. He looked up at the sky. Until to-day he had never thought much about the sky at all, which as one gazes at it always becomes bluer and bluer, the azure always deeper and the light more intense. Somewhere a church clock chimed half-past four.

It was time he went on to the metro station on the lookout for that girl. But John was not familiar with the Luxembourg, how did one get to the Place de la Concorde? Luckily, in the damp sand his tracks were still visible. He bent down: the great thing was not to make a mistake in the footprints.

With a sigh he left the lovely garden. A new sort of pain, not without its charm, made him linger as he passed the windows of the little shops, just as a lover loiters after a quarrel sure of being recalled from the window. Under the arcades of the Odéon, amongst a crowd of other books, he saw a volume of Montesquieu just like his own, and his heart beat quickly. He put his hand on the book-seller's shoulder and led him out to look at it, winking with the air of a fellow-conspirator. Everything was fresh, radiating happiness under the blue sky of France; the streets were full of sunshine and the slanting rays peeped into the furthest corners of the rooms, no shadow seemed to hang over the good people of France. And the people themselves! One felt that their hearts were as full of good-will as their homes of sunshine. The light-hearted girls selling china and the good folk at the dairies were all smiling. . . . Why not shut one's eyes and listen to the ripple of the brooks? Why not throw your cap in the air—oh, too bad! he had forgotten it—in honor of Paul Fort who was coming out of the Deux Magots?

He went into a shop to buy a tiger-skin waistcoat. Nothing finer was ever seen than this waistcoat lined with white leather. The furrier pointed out that this was no imitation of the real thing, no tiger-cat, still less a jackal—animals which had their value certainly but that he had no great opinion of. No, this was a young tiger from the South of India, the region where they spoke Bengali. It must not be confused with wild cat or any

other of the feline tribe hardly worthy of mention. Besides, this waistcoat would wear for a hundred years.

John put it on at once. The stripes went horizontally; he paid and went out. As he was crossing the threshold the shopkeeper again shouted after him that this was not just an ordinary tiger from Mongolia or Gobi!

John proceeded rapidly towards the Place de la Concorde. It was at the metro station there that he had seen the young girl on the previous evening when returning from the Ministry of Finance. He hastened his pace, reddening a little occasionally. A passer-by, looking very astonished, approached him. John gave the military salute in reply without stopping, and showed all his teeth, imitating the tiger. Rather amusing, that. Why hadn't he thought of it before?

In vain he watched the crowd stream out of the underground. The girl was not there. Disappointed, he hailed a taxi and was driven home. He was thoughtful, and Edward regained his confidence, seeing him come into the dining-room as usual with his eyebrows drawn together, his expression one of gravity. But John was not thinking of business, and it was not difficulties in Chili or disappointments in Hungary that were worrying him this time. It was because he had not found the girl. Perhaps she only took the metro twice a week, or once a month even? Or did she walk? How could one find a girl in Paris? Consult a spiritualist? Put an advertisement in the newspapers? Wait until chance brought about another meeting? John hardly ate anything. He complained loudly about the food and uncorked four bottles of Burgundy without finding a wine to satisfy him. Edward was delighted; the good old days had come back.

John was just on the point of going to bed when the sub-director from the bank, Mr. Quantelme, was announced. John made him sit down in the green drawing-room.

"How are you?" asked the sub-director. "The staff have asked me to convey their best wishes to you, and we hope that you will soon be quite well again. Certainly, these last few days you have been overdoing things. . . ."

Mr. Quantelme had a way of beginning his phrases very rapidly and finishing them slowly. He had a large black beard. John remained still, his eyes brilliant.

Mr. Quantelme continued.

"I have come to talk over two or three matters with you for which I don't care to hold myself entirely responsible. . . ."

"Mr. Quantelme, you should comb your beard."

John looked down at his visitor, his aspect threatening and his eyes like carbuncles. Mr. Quantelme laughed weakly; he was getting nervous.

"You must comb your beard. . . . Now as to these matters?"

"Well, to begin with. You remember that last January Baring had promised us. . . ."

"Tooooootchi. Tooooootchi. . . ."

"I will come back to-morrow. I can see it is too much for you to-night. . . . So if you will excuse me . . . the other questions can wait. But can you not give me some idea of when you may return—just an approximate date? As you know, we ought to write to the Board of Directors. . . ."

But John had left the room. He had been suddenly seized with an idea whilst Mr. Quantelme was talking; but by the time he reached his bedroom he had already forgotten what it was. Impossible to recall it. Never mind! It might come to him in the night. Besides, he was tired. He got into bed and slept soundly.

IV

In three days John had enlarged his circle of acquaintances enormously. He gave himself up to France, love and the goodwill of his fellows—overcome by classic genius. All those things, to which John had paid allegiance for so many years, had been vanquished by a young girl's eyes. International business, the cult of cosmopolitanism, a taste for English furniture, Irish sauces, Italian motor-cars, Belgian women and holidays in Switzerland as well as daily telephone conversations with the great bankers of Europe ceased to interest him. John gave himself entirely to France, like the Claude Lorrains brought back from Cleveland. His admiration of yesterday for orchids at 100 francs was replaced by a passion for Jaqueminot roses. And John (or rather Jean, for he took his baptismal name again at the same time he gave up whiskey in favor of cognac), had not put his nose

inside the office. He had read all Montesquieu, and was beginning Rousseau, taking the books in the order in which they were arranged on the library shelves. After Rousseau came Jules Romains. It had not taken Jean long to come to an understanding of Rousseau. One had to search for nature, and to love it. Paris was full of nature. All the discoveries that a child brought up in the country may make in his first ten years Jean made in a few days between the Madeleine and the Observatoire, finding four-leaved clovers on the Boulevard St. Germain, petting the sheep at Montparnasse, settling a quarrel of some country-folk from Auvergne in the rue Vavin. Jean wetted his finger to see which way the wind was blowing from and cut himself whistles from the willows in the Luxembourg gardens. Above all he adored women. Up to that time he had never met a woman who had not been associated in his mind with some business matter, a pearl necklace worth 20,000 francs or a luxurious car. There was Germaine; who after all was Germaine if not the net result of a good deal in Huanchaca, a house for sale on the rue Coetlogon and a game of poker at the Japanese Embassy? Henriette? a lucky speculation on the Rio, which Huchard had advised against, and three dresses from Paquin. Then there was Fernande, whom he had known just one evening, and who was associated in his mind with a lucky number in the lottery at the Egyptian club and a pair of coral ear-rings. Not one of these women but was connected with two or three foreign countries and a Jew. But now John was only aware of the women themselves who interested him. Sometimes, perhaps, as he followed a girl he was conscious of the atmosphere of a special province, the green freshness of la Vendée or the gray sky of Brittany. But it was nature pure and simple that caused women, whether auburn haired or dark, to exercise this fascination over him. Instead of bringing to his mind visions of palatial hotels and trains de luxe they suggested rather a mill, a pool of dark water or a gray misty morning in the hazel woods. Instead of wishing for a mistress in a mole-skin coat, the envy of Lachelmayer and Santa-Suzanna at the Ritz, he wanted to kiss a little country girl in the hollow of some old willow tree.

How wonderful autumn seemed in Paris! What a beautiful sound the evening breeze drew from the trees already half bare.

There was no questioning the fact, everything that the great classics had said was true. They had not all been mistaken, as had too often been said without due reflection. Chateaubriand, and this can be verified, had not told a single lie about the trees, the winds or the clouds. Rousseau, standing on his pedestal, without lowering his eyes, could look the whole world in the face, for he had only told the truth. Yes, man is good; yes, it is absolutely necessary that mothers should themselves nourish their children. Jean wandered round the streets and then went home and played the guitar. Never had he been so gay. Never had life seemed so wonderful. His being opened like a flower, for ceaselessly some monument gathered together the confused feelings which had dwelt within him since childhood. The Louvre quenched his old thirst for truth which had been thwarted daily through the years by little lies. The Louvre was perfect. Jean would not have changed anything there. He would have made it just as it was. The fear of death took wings at sight of the rue St. Denis, a chapter from the Contrat Social was enough to dispell the wish to torture small animals, to drug cats. A few bars from Méhul were sufficient to soothe the soul, to produce a state of harmony and beauty where nothing ugly could exist.

V

It was an autumn day, one of those days when nature seems to have reached her zenith, when she fills the heart of man full to overflowing, where nothing is missing—the autumn scabious, the wood fires by the roadside and sad romantic poets roaming through the woods; a day when wind and rain send a shower of golden leaves fluttering over the houses on the Boulevard St. Michel, the very antithesis of spring when even the name of lilac bears no suggestion of perfume, it was on that day when Jean was at Mlle. Adrienne Monnier's house that he had that strange meeting with Juliette Périer, who had been purchasing a copy of Ulysses for her grandfather and had placed the book on the top of her basket of eggs. She had beautiful black eyes that proclaimed her a lover of trees and flowers, and just to see her smile at Mlle. Monnier was enough to call up pictures of a childhood in the country, a touch of romance about it, an old

castle falling into ruin, sculptured yews and shady groves, and evenings passed by candle-light, writing in a diary. There is somewhat the same look about all the little sisters of Eugénie de Guérin, and seeing her open the door one knew that she used to feed hens and pigeons every day and that all the impulses of her heart were pure and strong like the clean winds blowing round a weather-vane. It was not difficult to see that if her blue tailor-made had come from the Trois-Quartiers, her garters, on the other hand, ought to have been bought near Mont. St. Geneviève and that she used a shoe-horn from Limoges of the time of Balzac when she put on her little patent shoes. On her hand once so white, but often stung by nettles or scratched by brambles, what mattered the tawdry little gold ring bought in the rue Lafayette? It was such a hand as Gavarni or Grandville would have drawn with their eyes closed.

John had gone to Mlle. Monnier's to buy a Montesquieu, having lost his own. It was the first time he had been in a bookshop, and he had the same sense of discomfort mixed with secret delight as a youth, brought up in the Puritan tradition, when he first watches dancing. The names of the great classics smiled him a welcome. To see Othello beside the Bijoux Indiscrets gave him the same pleasure as the sight of Goethe and Schiller walking together, or Beethoven ringing at Haydn's door. Thanks to Mlle. Monnier, the classics were all good friends; Byron fraternized not only with Shelley but with Tacitus and Suetonius. Jean was filled with amazement; for him it was a great discovery. Why not believe henceforth that all things were for the best, that life was beautiful in spite of everything, since great writers had established such wonderful order in the past? There were two strangers standing at the far end of the book-shop. If Jean had only known that they were Valéry Larbaud and Léon Paul Fargue! But he did not. Juliette was just going when the door opened and Marie Laurencin entered. Jean did not know her, but why deny he felt confusedly that there was something extraordinary about these personalities? Just as sometimes you imagine that the well-dressed stranger who helps you out of the tram is perhaps the Prince of Wales. Jean was much moved. He trembled with excitement when he saw Léon Paul Fargue strike a match and Larbaud put his cigarette to the flame, which

lit up both their faces. Jean closed his eyes, and then opened them. In one second he had seen all autumn as two great avenues of sky and foliage. Insensibly he drew nearer Juliette, passing from Molière to Montaigne, and from Montaigne to Sallust. Marie Laurencin had seated herself, surrounded by phantoms. He was quite close to Juliette when Prince Shakaline entered. He was a huge fellow with a face like a hawk, a hawk with whiskers. He knew Jean.

"My dear Sir," said he, "how glad I am to meet you . . . But what an extraordinary coincidence. . . ."

He never finished his phrases at the beginning of a conversation, like the hautbois before a symphony. The prince sometimes came to see Jean at the Bank to ask his opinion on the Quaternary Period, the Miocene or the Pliocene, for he never consulted the people he should have: when he was ill he got his friends amongst the artists and sculptors to prescribe for him, going to doctors for a discussion on racehorses. Thus he had come to Mlle. Monnier's not to buy books (that he entrusted to the chemist), but for some information about Orénoque. Was it a river, a country, or both? For the last forty years this diplomat had traveled from one spa to another. He had sampled all the springs of Europe and he knew almost every village. But the other continents were unknown to him. At Silo-Maria he was the friend of Nietzsche, at Baden-Baden of Tourguenieff and at Bath of Dickens, for writers love those who never talk to them of literature. Moreover, he was a friend to all those who met him frequently; for the very sight of him conjured up romance—the year 1874, the beautiful blue Danube, evenings with Prince Metternich. Sometimes one might see him burst out laughing when all alone; he was thinking of an incident that had happened at Marienbad in 1880, coming out of the Bouffes where he had heard "Madame" whistling a waltz from Johann Strauss. The only man in Europe who wrote waltz with a "w" and cigar with two "r's." He had a medal struck of himself every year which he distributed amongst his friends. On the reverse was a woman's portrait but the name was different each time for he had a fresh mistress every year, changing at Easter.

Other customers came in eager to read the "Green Magazine." The Prince was delighted to find himself amongst his friends

although in strange surroundings. He would often invite all the passengers on a tram to come back to tea with him. He would stop anybody in the street, take an old lady or an elderly lawyer by the arm to point out to them a rose-tipped cloud or lead them to a flower-stall to admire the tulips. And as he could never bear to part from any one without making him a present, the strangers went away alarmed, bewildered and delighted loaded with gold cigarette-cases bearing a coronet in rubies, superb canes or tortoise-shell snuff-boxes. But if they were Jews he would chase them off with a stick like a crowd of chickens.

Jean was close to Juliette now. It was no use thinking of going because the shop was full of people and the Prince in his big overcoat entirely blocked the doorway. Jean was delighted. He inhaled the delicate scent of her powder. Juliette did not appear to be in any hurry to leave. She was glancing through some magazines. She blushed a little, conscious of Jean's proximity. This man, in his tiger-skin waistcoat and violet coat appealed to her, but she was prepared to be angry if he spoke to her and to hate him if he touched her arm; however, she stood still submissively. She noticed that he was reading over her shoulder, and she waited a moment before turning the page so that he might finish. No one took any notice of them; Fargue and Larbaud were engrossed in Spain, Marie Laurencin, near the window, was enveloped in azure; the blue light of evening fell on her like a benediction, and one knew that all she said of stars and trees and the night would from henceforth be absolutely true. Prince Shakaline was relating how Bismarck had been almost strangled by a fish-bone at Ems and how Wagner had choked over a brioche the same year. Mlle. Monnier was as much at home in her bookshop as the Angel of Rheims in the cathedral. She was dressed in gray, but one felt that at any minute she might suddenly appear in red, white and blue, as though draped in the colors of France. Jean did not utter a word to Juliette, and as the moments passed his shyness increased. All the misdeeds of his past life came before him, and he felt himself unworthy to speak to this pure girl. How was it possible to tell her that he thought her pretty, when his conscience was troubled by the memory of the squirrel he had run over with his motor-cycle? How declare his respect and admiration when he remembered

causing his two grandmothers tears on the same day—one in Paris and the other at Chartres? How touch her hand after ruining the shareholders of the De Beers stock?

His emotion increased momentarily. He was reading not only Suarès but the back of Juliette's neck. One by one her qualities became apparent. She was loyal and upright, and when she told a lie she blushed so much that no one was deceived,—in the daylight, and at night—surely a lie is not a lie?

Juliette closed her eyes, all her being conscious of Jean's presence. Her neck felt a curious warmth, and she could count his heart-beats, which got faster every minute. She continued to hold the magazine, though the article by Suarès was finished. They both realized that they had only a moment more together, that never again would they find themselves side by side like this, that never again would they see Larbaud and Fargue burn match after match, or Marie Laurencin rise from her chair, mantled darkly by the night and caressed by the soft breeze sighing through the trees, or the Prince reciting Tutchév's poetry in an undertone; autumn seemed to come into the library all at once, invading the hearts of all, and surrounding Mlle. Monnier with the sound of crackling leaves. They looked at each other in despair because they must part without speaking, never to meet again. The picture of a steamer leaving port came to them simultaneously, and they both turned pale. How could one speak to a girl after ten minutes' silence, above all when overwhelmed by the realization of his past misdeeds? How was it possible to let a stranger address you when you knew already that he was in love with your eyelashes and adored your arms and the curve of your breast? Fortunately the Prince saw them blushing, face to face, both holding on to the Review of Two Worlds as though it weighed a hundred pounds, and sympathized with their dilemma. Had he not seen the same thing at Tiflis in 1890?

"Mademoiselle," said he, "allow me to present Mr. John S. S., the director of the banking company of John S. S." And taking them both by the arm he led them into the street.

VI

A week had passed and Jean had not been back to the office. The president of the board of directors wrote to him and re-

ceived the following reply, written on pink notepaper with a clover leaf and a pink pig in the corner:

"Have discovered the world. It was all so simple. It is full of delightful women, and autumn is so beautiful.

Jean."

The president had called a meeting of the board of directors, but he did not read this letter aloud. Jean was the owner of three-quarters of the stock of the bank, and therefore he must be handled with tact. To the indignant shareholders, who asked why the director had been seen walking across the Park of St. Cloud playing a mandolin, why—according to rumor—he was a friend of the Mexican revolutionaries, and why he had bought 15,000 pesetas' worth of parrots, the president replied, to the best of his ability, that Jean was tired, that he needed distraction, moreover that Mr. Quantelme had taken over Jean's responsibilities at the bank, and Jean's eccentricities, far from proving injurious to the bank, were attracting attention to it, and that during the last few days the number of clients and accounts had increased considerably.

In short, the director did not seem inclined to take his share in the business again, but he had assured the directors that he intended to leave intact the large sums he had invested in the bank, and they might therefore anticipate the same satisfactory results as heretofore. The shareholders departed quite reassured.

VII

Jean had not seen Juliette since the evening he said good-by to her on the rue de l'Odéon. He had not even thought of her again. He did not think of people any more because the faces and personalities of his friends faded away, becoming merely symbols in his mind. Juliette was no longer a girl with a Greek nose, she had become the symbol of an old-world garden enclosed by stone walls where fruit-trees shivered in the winter; she called to mind all the thoughts borne by the north wind at six o'clock on a November evening. How could one invite her to tea at Rumpelmeyer's or arrange lovers' meetings? Besides Jean had hardly time to think of such things; from morning to evening

he was reveling in Paris, Paris itself. He went up and down there as one does in a room awaiting the arrival of a friend, straightening a picture, arranging a dahlia in a vase. Suddenly, driven by an irresistible desire, he would take a taxi to *Sacré Cœur* which seemed to beckon him, then away in the opposite direction where the *Trocadero* called him. Above all, Jean constituted himself the defender of all that Paris held of modesty and innocence struggling against adverse forces. When he met little girls crying because of their music lessons he consoled them, telling them the sad story of Schumann, which he embellished with touching details of his own invention. To unhappy artists, too poor to buy tobacco, he would give a hundred cigarettes in memory of Cézanne, who, he pretended, was his cousin. In a few days he had become an expert in reading faces, and could differentiate at sight between ordinary everyday troubles and others; and, if he turned away in disdain from bank clerks abandoned by their mistresses and chemists angry on account of increased taxes, he was quick to sympathize with the anguish of a novelist or the grief of a dancer. He knew by a glance that a certain young man felt moved to tears by an article of Paul Souday's, and he would offer him a bunch of Parma violets. But he mocked at ruined stockbrokers and promoters of theatrical ventures in search of capital. If any one on the underground spoke of Grieg, Jean, very much moved, would cross over and shake him by the hand, congratulating him. The day the President of the Republic spoke of Rotrou at Autun, Jean wrote him a long letter. Amongst a regiment on the march Jean would quickly distinguish the young soldier who was proud of being French—more especially because of the kinship it gave him with Ronsard—and he would walk alongside him speaking in terms of friendly commendation.

In November, throughout the centuries, there has always been a marvelous azure day, when the sky is so intensely blue it seems like a great canopy under which the sound of a single bell will vibrate over the whole country-side. The great bare trees sparkle with gold and from the fountains flow waters of healing. The French people who drink of them that day become a little more French. Lovers who inhale the morning air are finer lovers,

and poets greater poets. On that day the churches are the real soul of the parish which, in the sunshine, becomes once more a parish of the Middle Ages where one listens to the sounds heard by Jeanne d'Arc—the cooper's mallet and the cobbler's hammer. The souls of men, too, acquire fresh strength from long-forgotten origins; even the bill-collectors, in their own minds, become aldermen and provosts. And the wine of France that morning, ah, Lord! The wine of France has a flavor, a bouquet, a delicacy which can never be forgotten. Instead of airs from Phiphi, the cooks, busy in their kitchens, sing the old songs of Berry, though they know not why any more than do the messengers who, on meeting, greet one another with some pious phrase recalling Péguy. Young shop-assistants, arranging a display of silk stockings, stop suddenly in their work, look through the window at the azure sky and stay immobile. It is as though some ancient secret were revealed to them.

Jean awoke that morning happier than ever. With his Montesquieu in his pocket he hurried off to see Prince Shakaline to whom he was much attached.

The Prince was just waking up in his octagonal room with its yellow wallpaper on which sported scarlet parrots. All the windows were wide open letting in the fresh morning air; breezes redolent of many a fair province met there and circled gently round the bed. The Prince sprang up to meet Jean, shaking him by the hand and regaling him with salmon and whisky, and afterwards asked him to sign his name in an album presented to him by Alexander III.

"And Juliette?" he asked.

Jean shook his head. He had not seen Juliette again.

"You have not seen Juliette?" The Prince turned crimson with indignation. "And I introduced you! Ah, my boy, that won't do! I can't permit you to scoff at love." (He was naked, but he began to dress himself rapidly.)

Jean was delighted. Juliette, Juliette, in her blue tailor-made. How had he managed to live without seeing her? He began to make excuses, but without conviction:

"I have been to the museum with friends from Marseilles."

The Prince made a threatening gesture with a large bottle of dentifrice.

"And when you came out of the museum?"

"I went to a concert."

"And after the concert? Come, it's no use making excuses!"

Although only half-dressed, the Prince was invested with all the authority of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"You are coming with me to the little girl's house. I have her address, for I have been to visit her. If she forgives you it is only because she is very good natured!"

They set off together, Jean feeling happier every minute. The walk through the streets, resounding with the noise of copper-smiths at work, was wonderful that day. Jean suddenly began to feel very shy, and the idea of seeing Juliette again made him blush.

"What ought I to say to her?" he asked the Prince.

He was experiencing the same emotion as at his first children's ball; the scent of lilacs and the little girls' hair all came back to him. He found a thousand reasons for dallying on the way: he read the posters and counted the pots of mustard in the windows of the grocery-shops, dragging his feet slowly along.

"Will she be alone?"

The Prince shrugged his shoulders and took him by the arm.

Juliette was not in. It was an old man, her grandfather, who opened the door. Jean's heart was in his mouth, but the Prince stepped forward and bowed.

"We have called, Sir," said he, "to inquire after your health. We know your granddaughter, and she has told us that you like to see visitors. Allow me to introduce Mr. John S. S., director of the banking company of John S. S., and myself, Wladimir Shakaline."

The old man bowed and led them into a sitting-room furnished in red velvet, a color befitting an old man. Mr. Périer was one of those grandfathers without a beard; he had a white mustache and his blue eyes looked at one through large spectacles. He was wearing the most extraordinary little check gaiters. In the sitting-room, where the morning sun made large triangular patches of light, was the aroma of spiced bread.

He offered his guests champagne.

"My greatest friend," said he, "is director of the Mumm Company. Won't you sit down. . . . So you know my grand-

daughter? You have doubtless met her at the library. Indeed, she often goes there to fetch me books, for I read a great deal. Until this last year I have had no time for books as I only retired at Easter. I little realized the pleasure of reading. . . .”

“Just like me,” cried Jean.

The Prince was charmed. The big man, in the depths of a huge armchair, was holding a glass of champagne.

“Is it true, Sir,” he demanded, “that field mice and moles have been particularly troublesome the last ten years? Some dentists were telling me so yesterday. You don’t know? Oh, never mind. It does not matter.” And he sighed heavily. “Your granddaughter is charming. She is exactly like the grand duchess Xenia at eighteen, my good friend Tourguenieff was telling me. . . .”

Jean was taking no part in the conversation. This room with its red chairs, one of which touched by the sun would have delighted Rembrandt, its lithographs and its big old-fashioned lamp was revealing, one by one, all Juliette’s charming qualities. The black marble clock told how earnest and serious Juliette was, chrysanthemums in a green vase spoke of her beauty, whilst a little rose sunshade of French design, in a far corner of the room, proclaimed her love of cornfields and willow trees and sincere thoughts spoken in the evening in shadowy lanes. To shake it would have scattered memories of past holidays about the old room. Perhaps a tiny elm leaf lingered in its folds. Montesquieu would not have disclaimed this sunshade.

But the Prince wanted at all costs to know the name of the insects that were attacking the corn. Mr. Périer, seated in his chair, was shaking his head. He got up and, opening a bureau, brought a bundle of bonds across to Jean.

“You are a banker, Sir, could you tell me. . . .”

But Jean, reading the titles, jumped like an Indian when he finds a little cobra coiled up in his napkin at lunch.

“What’s that?” he cried.

And he rushed out, forgetting his hat even.

Never had he felt so upset. Fortunately it was not so fine now. Motorbuses crossed the Boulevard St. Michel in every direction, and one could no longer hear the coopers and blacksmiths at work. This unrivaled morning was passed, and after all, Jean’s

grief was only a very ordinary one in proportion to life. Little leaves shivered between the black iron gratings. No woman called to mind beautiful barbaric slaves.

"Luckily, that was the only thing lacking!" growled Jean.

His life was ruined! He had to admit it himself. He had been a banker. Now he was nothing, no, nothing definite. The sweet and magic influence had been withdrawn from him. The gilt signs of the chiropodists on the third stories, so gay when one saw them in the light of the sunrise on the way to catch the train for Naples, were dull and somber.

"What's the good of living?" Jean asked himself.

An unfortunate question, for it is terrible to find no answer to it. A heavy cloud overhung the Boulevard St. Michel. One laughed scornfully at the word sun, as a lover mocks at the name of love when deceived by his mistress. And yet, under all this despair a great new force was struggling, holding itself in readiness. A force both grand and tragic, which after all molds all our actions, the same that sent Amundsen to the Pole and forced the plumbers to read Eugène Sue. The same that vibrates through the name of Paris; the same that makes us suddenly kiss the neck of the girl kneeling at our feet, as she tries on shoes.

Jean sat down at a little table in a bar and, having asked for paper, wrote:

JOHN'S POEMS

But he had hardly dipped his pen in the ink when it began to rain. Certain poets (and Jean was one of them), cannot write when it rains. The only picture in their minds is one of Inspiration, shivering, and folding her wet wings. It is at such times that poets, unable to contain themselves any longer, put on a waterproof and sally forth to visit their mistress, with whom they pick a quarrel; it is then that they tear up their manuscripts, laughing sardonically, without even stopping to take their hats off.

In the little bar where he had taken refuge Jean began to weep. At last he was plumbing the depths of despair; he was in touch again with his far-away childhood, with the unhappiness of his first night at school, and again of the last night at school

when he had had to part from Raoul, his cherished friend. His despair, moreover, to-day, had no redeeming touch of beauty, nothing in common with the Laocoön group or the Dying Gladiator. It was quickly assuaged, however, by the sight of a young woman's graceful limbs, revealed as she hurried against the storm. She crossed the boulevard in a shower of golden leaves. She seemed to come towards Jean, her head lowered against the storm, as from a long journey. She entered the café.

"Mr. Jean!" said she simply.

"Juliette!"

Juliette said nothing, reader. She did not say, "Heavens! how wet I am! My stockings are ruined." She did not say either, "What a coincidence! How did you get here?" She merely sat down by Jean in the café, which was empty except for the proprietor, and ordered an anisette. Old smells of the sea floated around them, the odor of pepper and ginger, and in the twilight thoughts of Port au Prince and the Philippines seized them suddenly, making them both smile. The little café, with its rows of red and green bottles and its proprietor at the counter like a captain on his bridge, was roaming very far away from Paris.

"Are you working?" she asked, pointing to his paper.

"Juliette, will you be my wife?" he asked.

He had asked the question without realizing the significance of the words, simply for the pleasure of saying it. Surely, this was some memory from Jules Verne. The rain and the wind sounded like the sea. It is the noise that disturbs and upsets all our thoughts. On the Boulevard St. Michel winter was approaching gently, and Jean had thought of nothing else to say. But he had spoken in a detached sort of way, his voice indifferent as he played with the blind. Then, suddenly, the blind dropped like the curtain at a theater, and all was dark.

"Leave the blind alone," cried the proprietor.

Jean had already done so. In the darkness he took Juliette's two hands and pressed them to his heart. Juliette resisted slightly, like a fruit not yet ripe that seems to reproach you for gathering it. But there are always tremendous forces ready to draw the woman you love to you, and Juliette swayed towards Jean.

"Will you draw up the blind?" cried the proprietor. "It is impossible to see anything."

Juliette was close to Jean. The same ray of light lit up both their faces. Jean inhaled the lingering perfume that hung about her hair. He was incapable of thought, or rather he was thinking too fast, which comes to the same thing. At last Juliette lay in his arms, like a ship safe in harbor after her voyage. She waited for Jean to repeat his question, but he was too overwhelmed with emotion. To hold a woman close against one is to find the answer to a thousand days of adolescence and solitude, it is to make peace with a hundred personalities who dwell within us, it is also to see the world, humanity and everything else from a special angle, it is like climbing giddily up to the top of an invisible column.

"Will you put the blind up?" grumbled the proprietor again.

But Jean and Juliette were not thinking about that.

"Do you love me?" she asked.

But words are of small import to lovers united in their first embrace. When the music of great orchestras is playing in two hearts words are like tiny tinkling sounds. Jean's arm was round Juliette's shoulders, and both his actions and hers were governed by primeval forces as irresistibly as gravitation causes the fall of an apple.

Suddenly the door was opened, causing the blind to fall. Outside the rain had ceased and the sun was shining. The bouvelard was paved in liquid azure, in which trembled the reflection of a house all golden in the sun.

Fascinated, Jean left Juliette, and went towards the door. He turned round there, putting his finger to his lips, and then passed quickly out into the lovely evening. He walked rapidly away. How he loved Juliette! If he was leaving her it was because he could not keep his joy and love to himself, he wanted to talk about it with Paris, the trees and the sky; and then, too, Juliette was everywhere, scattered, invisible yet present, like the old classic spirit of Rome which pervades Italy. Everything explained itself in terms of Juliette, she held the secret of all things. The Odéon represented the serious side of Juliette, when grave thoughts were uppermost, the Juliette of the days of the declaration of war . . . and of wash-days. The Luxembourg was

Juliette in holiday mood—long happy days in the sunshine. Whilst the Pantheon, under a canopy of gray sky and driving rain, was Juliette in a reverie, her eyes wide open, the needle in her idle fingers, dreaming of the things that women hand on to one another but which men never understand from generation to generation. Paris was full of light and shadow and mist, like some great flower in disarray. Jean kept on running, his hands to his heart. "Juliette!" he cried. Every minute he loved her more. Before St. Sulpice he adored her, giving himself up to an ecstasy of rapture which the passers-by did not notice, but which the monuments approved. It was impossible to be mistaken. The Louvre approved of the love of Jean and Juliette. Between inanimate things and lovers there exists a mysterious sympathy, ignored by others, and in our love affairs the real witnesses that we can call upon are not our human companions but such and such an archway or acacia in flower. So whilst our friends are vainly striving to reconcile us with our beloved, our guardians writing letters to this end and everywhere people telephoning and taxiing and generally exciting themselves, it is a bench in the Square Monge that decides it all for us and allows the kiss of reconciliation to be given.

At the Place Alma Jean made up his mind to marry Juliette. He went straight home to write to her. But he found a letter from her awaiting him. To tell the truth, this letter had been written, though Jean did not know why, by Prince Shakaline, who had slipped in some verses of Tibulle. "Sir," said this letter. . . .

"SIR:

I do not understand your conduct. Are you making fun of me? Why did you leave me like that—without a word? Why, if you must betray my unhappy love, do you ask the gods to witness vows which you make to me in secret only to break? I hope you will give me an explanation of your conduct. If I were less indignant I would admit that you have caused me pain, for light love always turns to bitterness because of the hard words it calls forth, and then remains like a barrier between the two parties.

If you want to see me again to explain your extraordinary

conduct I shall be on the Pont Neuf at 9 o'clock to-morrow evening.

She who might have been your friend,

JULIETTE PERIER."

Jean was overcome with grief. One of those great griefs whose cause cannot be exactly defined and from which everything distracts you, but after every distraction the grief comes uppermost again just because you have been distracted. He had let the letter fall to the ground, saying, "My life is broken," and then he had rung for tea.

"How could I have done such a thing?" he asked himself. "Is it irreparable? What exactly have I done?"

An orange-colored house stood out clearly in the blue afternoon. Jean tried to recapture his sorrow. But he did not succeed, instead a thousand ideas came to beguile him.

"I have hurt Juliette's feelings, and I deserve to be shot." And he turned over the pages of *La Vie Parisienne*.

"Perhaps I have made Juliette cry," said he, striding up and down. He stood still. This idea was not altogether disagreeable. It was horrible! What a complicated thing love is! As complicated as an Italian poem full of words and allegories, birds and heroes. Jean threw open the window. He was stifled. In the clear sky the birds were flying, and down below lovers, a thousand times more slowly, were following the same direction. It was an enchanted afternoon. Down in the street only things suggesting happiness and pleasure were to be seen, errand-boys delivering chrysanthemums, beautiful women in their luxurious limousines, comic writers, the vendors of humming-birds and a pretty negress. Leaning out from this window one might have imagined that men had always been happy since the world began.

The door opened and Prince Shakaline came in.

"You have had our letter? Well, what is your reply?"

"My dear friend," said Jean, "my reply is that I am going to marry Juliette."

He stopped short. A wife! He was going to have a wife! A thousand pleasing duties would fall to his lot. He would have to take care that she did not catch cold when they came out of the theater, if necessary use gentle authority to make her close

her fur. Encourage her to arrange the flowers for the table herself, teach her to dance, but above all insist that she learn to discriminate in all matters of taste and feeling. Advise her gently but firmly to walk for an hour every day and to take a little rest after lunch, give her a dowry, and an income as well as some shares in the Credit Lyonnais. . . . What were the Credit Lyonnais quoted at? Jean ran to the telephone.

"Hello, yes, it is I, the Director. Good morning, Sir. Pretty firm? Good. Will you make a note to buy a hundred shares to-morrow, if possible for cash. And the Exchanges? Steady? Thank you, I'm all right, yes, to-morrow at the office."

The Prince was sitting in an armchair. Unfortunately he had found the butler's ocarina on the table, and was trying to play a cavatina from Glinka.

A wife!

Jean danced to the music of the ocarina, and the room was flooded with light.

"Come," said the Prince.

Jean put on his hat and followed the Prince, but returned to get his volume of Montesquieu.

"Without him I should never have seen anything of all that," said he, indicating, through the open window, Paris, the world and the glorious blue and gold afternoon.

DAIMONION BIB

By WACLAW GRUBINSKI

THE air of the bedroom was saturated with the enervating odor of medicine. In the still hours of the night, and in the half obscurity of the room, the stifling odor seemed to stretch in long skeins from the bed in which the patient was lying to the curtains of the windows.

The odor was so intense that it infiltrated every object in the room.

The coal was burning silently in the open stove throwing red reflections across the great carpet.

The silence was sepulchral.

The old man, who had been delirious a little while before, had become calm again. His eyelids were half open, his immobile face bathed in perspiration, and he had thrust aside the bed clothing with his great heavy hands.

At the foot of the bed, huddled in a great armchair, a young woman slept silently. It was the fourteenth night of her vigil at the bedside of her husband.

In the wavering half light, half shadow, she appeared like a vision. Her dark hair falling over her shoulders made them seem whiter and more ghostlike in contrast.

A wooden screen, which stretched beside the bed on the side of the anti-chamber cracked sharply. . . . Nata opened her eyes and fixed them upon the sick man.

Among the bottles, boxes, and glasses, and beside a spoon used to measure out the doses, a huge watch seemed to begin to tick more loudly . . . the lamp to burn with a clearer flame, and the coal in the stove to burn more vigorously. A weird sound could be heard behind the curtains. . . . A piece of paper rolled up on the floor suddenly straightened out.

The old man in the midst of these noises gave no sign of life whatsoever.

His heavy face and his hairy chest were bathed in perspiration, and his half-gray hair stuck to his temples.

His eyelids were swollen and his nose was sunk deeply between his puffy, mottled cheeks. Straggling locks of hair wandered over his upper lip and chin, forming a disagreeable contrast to his thick red lips.

It seemed to Nata that her husband called her name:

"Nata."

She moved quickly to the bed-side, threw herself down beside the sick man. She could barely hear his breathing, which had grown excessively short and scarcely perceptible.

"He sleeps all the time," she thought.

She looked at the watch. "It is two o'clock," Nathalie said to herself. She stood looking at the swollen face of the old man with a mixture of anxiety, astonishment, and discontent on her face.

She went back and threw herself down again in the armchair. But she did not close her eyes. Notwithstanding her fatigue, the thoughts passing rapidly across her mind drove all desire for sleep from her wide staring eyes.

The hours dragged along slowly. . . . The doctor had assured her the sick man would die before midnight.

Nata sighed. . . . Something fluttered in her breast—something resembling the movement of the little golden fishes flitting hither and thither in a great aquarium. . . . It was the return of her dreams which had slept so long undisturbed. Her heart complained gently in reminding her of the years which could never be recalled, of those fifteen years of her youth . . . vanished forever. . . . Years of youth and folly passed in the embraces of this old man . . . of the years she had lightly sold!

She ground her teeth in anger. She was overwhelmed for the moment with a feeling of repugnance for her mother who had urged her into the arms of an old man of sixty years—a hypocrite, a miser. . . .

Nata rebelled. She wanted to hurl herself like a wild beast upon her mother and tear her from her calm sleep, to shriek at her: "Coward. Idiot. Thief" . . . and to drive her forever from home! Or she might stay on condition that she restore to her daughter the wasted years! . . . that she undo the evil she

had thrust upon her. . . . In short, that she perform a miracle . . . to restore her youth, lost forever, give back her sunny daring youth . . . that ephemeral rose which in this sad and barren life blooms but once.

For a moment Nathalie stiffened, as if she were preparing for an assault,—or for a motive. But instead of rushing to her mother's room she slid down, like a shadow, into the deep arm-chair.

A voice within her cried out resentfully, with all its strength, against the crime she had committed against herself:

"Coward. Idiot!" and that voice taunted Nathalie cruelly of having put herself outside of the life to which she was entitled.

Her jaws set together when she thought of the first days of her marriage. The coarse creature had taken his wife to an impossible little village. He could scarcely wait to get away in his impatience. The crow, having found a precious jewel, carried it away to a secluded place to better enjoy himself.

The old man was intrigued by the freshness and youth of Nathalie. When he saw her he trembled and babbled foolish words of adoration. Now and then a sort of pity for the child aroused in his consciousness a cruelty a thousand times greater, and his baffled tears made him only the more odious.

Nathalie shivered. Then she could hear her mother's voice, wasted by want (privation), softly pleading in her ear words of encouragement:

"He will die after a while and you will be free, rich and still young."

After this she had borne the martyrdom of the first year of her married life patiently.

The old man burned with a fruitless ardor. He forgot everything, even his passion for gold. He was so jealous that he became estranged from their friends, and deserted the city where he had lived all his life. He devoted himself entirely to his wife—indifferent and cold. His passion for gold had left him and his impossible deadly passion for his wife took its place. It tortured him beyond endurance; he cursed old age and the beauty and charm of Nathalie.

Happiness was apparently within his grasp but it eluded him. He had not an instant's peace of mind nor a moment's tranquillity. His nights were hideous with sleeplessness.

He raged and bellowed furious anathemas or passed whole days silently in morose brooding. He became thinner and began to waste away under the strain of it.

Then one day the love-sick old man pounded the table with his fists and hoarsely poured out his complaints against the situation in which he found himself.

When his anger had spent itself, he experienced a certain disgust for his wife.

Forthwith he began to torture her. He watched her every movement, trying to wrest from her her thoughts.

As the spider envelops the gnat in the thread of its web, he weighed her down with his constant spying and vigilance. But Nathalie bore even the espionage with fortitude because her mother constantly repeated:

"Wait! you will soon be free, still beautiful and rich. The old man will certainly die soon."

Notwithstanding her prophecies the years rolled away and he lived on, passing his days altogether in the company of his faithful bulldog Bib.

The years passed by for Nathalie in deadly monotony, and she saw her youth slipping away from her. Her despairs and agonies gave place to a deadly indifference at the end, under the strain.

Then one day the old man cried out feebly to his wife:

"Nata! . . . Nata! . . ."

She hastened to his side.

"Send some one for a doctor, but on no account leave me alone."

"Are you ill?"

"No, it is nothing! . . . Send some one for a doctor! . . ."

Nathalie thought immediately, "Now I shall soon be left alone, rich and still beautiful."

She sat down and regarded herself in her mirror. . . . It had been a long time since she had examined her reflection, certainly not with the joy of this moment.

She burst into a flood of tears and rushed to ask her mother to send for the doctor. She sobbed as she might have done if she had endured the tortures of a prison and had been told:

"Dry your tears, for to-morrow, to-morrow, you will be liberated!"

She dried her tears and went back to her husband, who asked her to sit down in the armchair. . . . He became silent and closed his eyes. . . .

After the doctor examined the sick man and prescribed for him, to Nathalie he said:

"Madame, there is no hope of saving him."

After that followed sleepless nights and days for her. The old man coughed incessantly; she was obliged to bathe his face and lips constantly. He slept scarcely at all . . . coughing constantly, calling for relief . . . the doctor . . . a surgeon . . . He groped among the bed clothes for Bib who was shut up in the kitchen.

After a week in that drug-laden atmosphere Nathalie grew pale. Her deep sunken eyes burned feverishly. After each service rendered to her husband she sunk into a profound sleep, but she was given no respite, for the dying man called constantly.

Although she was waiting for her husband's death with no regret, she nevertheless tended to his wants conscientiously and prepared his medicines, although she knew this to be of no avail. . . . At the end of her physical forces, she had but one desire—to sleep—if only for an hour. Upon this fourteenth night of her vigil the doctor had assured her that the old man would pass away before midnight. . . . It was now two o'clock and the invalid was sleeping peacefully. . . . Nata looked at him uneasily.

The room was as quiet as a tomb after the sick man's struggle for breath. His racking cough had ceased. . . . He had thrown back the bed clothing and his great thick lips were half open but his face was immobile.

"He is sleeping," Nata murmured.

"It is two o'clock—two hours beyond the time."

Nathalie's eyes glistened and shone like lamps in the obscurity.

Her mother slept on. Nevertheless it was certainly very disagreeable to be alone with a dying man. Her mother had prom-

ised to stay with her and—she had not done it. Nata was filled with resentment and disgust. She wondered dismally if God had deserted her in her difficulties.

The shaded light showed her face wasted by her long vigil. Her dark hair falling over her shoulders threw out the contrasting whiteness of her body.

Her thoughts flitted from one thing to another, as a butterfly wanders lightly, touching here and there.

All at once Nata saw her husband's gaze fixed upon her as if he had been observing her for a long time.

She froze under his stare.

"Do you need anything?" she asked, rising.

He continued to stare without responding to her inquiry.

"How do you feel?"

"Better," he replied in a low voice, but without coughing. Nathalie trembled. A fear seized her.

"You are better," she said, looking at him attentively.

He said, with difficulty, "Give me a cigarette."

"It is forbidden by the doctor."

"Give it to me," he said obstinately.

"Very well," Nata replied immediately.

"There are only cigars," she said.

"Well, give them to me," replied the old man.

Nata took a cigar out of the box. "I will cut it for you."

"All right, and light it under the lamp."

Nata set the cigar on the table and cut it awkwardly.

"But don't cut too much off," called the miser. "Take it between your teeth and pull hard!"

When the cigar was lighted the old man lifted himself a little. "Arrange my pillows!" he commanded.

Nata set the cigar on the ash tray and did as she was bidden. —"Give it to me, do you hear?"

Nathalie gave him the cigar without saying a word. He took it and tried to put it into his mouth with his trembling hands. It fell upon his chest. He took it up again but began at once to cough. Nathalie took the cigar away and waited until his cough had spent itself. The cigar had gone out, so she began to light it anew.

"Put it away," the old man said feebly.

"Don't you want to smoke any more?"

"Take it away."

He closed his eyes. "Sit down," he said to Nata.

She sat down in the armchair.

The old man did not stir. Then he asked, "Where is Bib?"

"In the kitchen." Nata felt that she could not keep from falling asleep. She closed her eyes. She listened for a word from her husband, nevertheless, but he kept silent.

"Perhaps he will sleep again," she thought drowsily, "or perhaps. . . ." Absolute silence reigned in the room. Nathalie sank into a profound sleep, and in her dreams she heard a voice saying:

"Believe me, there is only you in the world! The world does not exist beyond you! because, my pretty one, you are the whole world in yourself. . . ."

The floor cracked as if under the heavy tread of a man. Nathalie started out of her slumbers, looked at the old man. The lamp burned as brightly as before. She could hear the fire burning in the stove—and the regular ticking of the watch.

The old man again rested without stirring. . . . His face was covered with perspiration; his grizzled hair stuck to his temples; his eyes closed as before, and his nose almost disappeared from sight between his swollen cheeks. . . . Stray locks of hair straggled across his chin, like weird shadows.

It seemed to Nathalie that her husband called "Bib!" She approached the bed very quietly.

The old man did not open his eyes. She threw herself down beside him and perceived that her husband had ceased to breathe.

The one thought, "He is dead," filled Nata's thoughts.

It was what she had been waiting for . . . still. . . .

She looked to see what time it was . . . five o'clock . . . "Three minutes to five," thought Nathalie. She stood there gazing down at the old man. She saw him now with no emotion, almost with indifference.

"He is dead," she repeated.

She went and sat down again in the armchair. Her thoughts were confused—she did not close her eyes, notwithstanding her fatigue. She stared widely into space.

Where was his spirit now? She began to wonder and surmise. She got up brusquely.

"He is dead!" the echo of her mother's voice . . . in her ear . . . "You are free, young . . . and still beautiful . . ." but there was that other echo—after fifteen years.

"I must go and wake mother," she said as she went into the salon on tiptoe. It was dark in there but she was familiar with every object in the room. She crossed to the door of her mother's room, opened it and called: "Are you asleep, mother?" Something moved in the corner. It was her mother on her knees in prayer, just faintly visible under a lamp.

"Who is there?" grumbled her mother, approaching to where Nata stood.

"I came to tell you, mother . . ."

"Oh, it is you, my little one. . . . What do you want, my child?" Nata was suddenly suffocated with anger as she stood watching her mother, who began complainingly to arrange her pillows. But her words were so indistinct that Nata could not catch them.

"He is dead," the daughter said drily.

She had got it out at last, and the old woman stood still. Neither spoke for a moment.

"You can go to sleep," said Nata mockingly as she went out and slammed the door.

Her mother called after her, "Certainly not, my child. How could I sleep now, my dear? What do you take me for? . . . Help me to light a candle. . . ." The old woman went about the room looking for matches—her slippers—her dress. . . .

Nata lighted the lamp for her mother. She did this because she was afraid now to go back into the death chamber alone.

The old woman asked her daughter as she dressed:

"What time is it, little one?"

"Five o'clock," she replied. . . . "It is certainly dark for that hour. The winter is very long this year," said the mother—continuing her dressing she sat down on the bed, musing a little . . . then she said, smiling:

"Let us go and see him, my little Nathalie," and they went across the dark salon to the bedroom together.

In the death chamber the lamp, although covered with newspapers, nevertheless shed a strange yellow glare. The odor of medicine seemed to envelop everything in the room.

The women stood beside the bed, looking down at the dead man, both thinking of his life. He, upon whom they had both depended utterly up to this moment . . . was no more. Only just the form remained. He was like any object henceforward become useless. . . . His look would never make them tremble again . . . because he could never look at them any more. . . . Just a dead body. . . . He could never hold up his head again . . . nor his hands. . . . He would never get up again . . . never . . . any more. Notwithstanding the fact that he was still under his own roof, even lying on his own bed! . . . That body stretched out there. . . . It was the same in form . . . in substance. But he who had dwelt within it had disappeared in death.

The mother took Nathalie by the hand. . . . They did not speak; they were filled with awe in the face of death, but they felt at the same time a certain relief at the realization that he did not exist any more. A heavy load seemed to be lifted from them, shackles to fall from their feet. They began to sense the feeling of liberty. . . . That inanimate body would carry away to the tomb their unhappiness, all the baseness the two women had suffered up to this moment.

The mother took Nathalie in her arms and kissed her. "You are free, my little Nata," she sighed. "Haven't I assured you countless times you would be?"

Nata did not return the kisses, she could hardly restrain herself from saying: "You did not tell me it would take eleven years to gain my freedom." She kept silent and went to her husband's desk.

Again a great feeling of fatigue overcame her . . . "He is dead," she thought indifferently over and over, that strange man, very well, this had indeed become a fact.

From the moment he had ceased to exist all her anger towards him had abated. The old man who had tortured her, by the fact that death had taken him, had become something which she had never known at all.

The mother placed two yellow tapers at the head of the bed and lighted them.

Nathalie yawned. . . . "Give me the little key you will find next to the watch," she requested. The old woman in her

hurry swept both the syphon and the little key on to the floor, but she soon found the key and gave it to her daughter.

Nathalie, in spite of her fatigue, opened the largest drawer in the desk and began to look it over. It was full of boxes and packages tied with string. . . . Nata looked into a little iron box. She saw there a silver chain—a small worn-out knife—a little piece of a pencil—other insignificant objects—fishhooks—a toothpick—a bit of sugar wrapped in a paper—even a piece of hard bread.

Nata opened another of the boxes. She only found a lot of old yellow receipts—a china stopper, probably belonging to an old perfume bottle. In a third box, made of wood, she found photographs of her husband's family, a little embroidered purse, a pressed oak leaf, a bit of old rubber that went to pieces in her hand. In the last package wrapped in a newspaper she found jewelry of no value whatever. There were three garnet brooches, a scarfpin of amethyst, a silver cigarette holder and a ring with the stone gone.

Nata lost interest in her search. She sat looking into space, seeing nothing. She was very sleepy.

"Ring for the maid," she asked her mother who stood beside her.

"The room must be aired, Rose must open the windows. I am going to lie down."

She locked the desk.

"Heavens," said her mother, "this place smells like a hospital. I will go to the kitchen and you must rest."

Nathalie did not move. She was waiting for Rosalie. She had ceased to be afraid of the dead man. She looked towards the bed. She thought there might be more light in the room now. . . . She noted that the smoke from the candles was reddish in tone like the hair of . . . that one . . . there. . . . She began to dream of that man . . . to picture in her imagination what might have been . . . if. . . .

"He told me that he loved me to distraction. . . . Oh, no, it could never be true. . . . It is impossible! . . . Just a dream. . . . Everything is possible in one's dreams . . . happiness so long deferred. . . . Behold even the Prince Charming . . . with

the russet hair . . . full of joy. . . . It is but a dream . . . the happy lover. . . .

"The garden is bathed in Spring sunshine. . . . The birds are singing. . . . Each stirring leaf and blade of grass sing in unison. The breezes fanning the perfumes hither and thither . . . the bubbling spring pouring forth its crystal draught. . . . Oh, if one could arrest this moment—could stretch it to eternity! . . . if such a miracle were possible. . . . Why, then, could one not have happiness here on earth? . . . Why? . . . This searching after happiness . . . forever. . . .

"The trees, the flowers, the branches, dance and frisk about like little children. . . . The butterflies flit about, the swallows glide through the air—even the sun dances between the lights and shadows of the fleecy clouds. Happiness invades everything, gets nearer and nearer . . . that flaming lover. . . . It comes upon a golden sunbeam. . . . It stirs everything to new life. . . . It spreads abroad upon the green earth. . . . Oh, come quickly! . . . Let nothing hold you back from me! . . . I have waited so . . . so . . . long.'"

Nathalie was awakened by a loud noise.

It was Bib who had been closed up in the kitchen so long. He entered the room very slowly, head lowered . . . and went directly to the bed where his master lay. . . . Then he threw back his head and wagged his tail joyfully. . . . But to his great astonishment the master did not speak to him. The dog stood still, puzzled and baffled. . . . He turned his great heavy head and looked at Nathalie a moment, then backed away and jumped upon the bed awkwardly.

The dog growled back at his mistress, but looked down affectionately at his master . . . beginning to lick his hand joyously. But as soon as he touched the cold, unresponsive hand, he bristled with horror and fell back trembling in every limb.

He threw himself down upon the inanimate body in pitiable distress. He uttered a groaning, defiant cry. Tears streamed from the eyes of the poor creature. . . . He threw back his head and howled again and again in hopeless despair. . . . He clawed the pillow, licking the face of his master, uttering a plaintive groaning cry.

Nathalie, shaken profoundly by such an expression of grief,

bounded up. A strange fear overcame her for a moment. She stood rooted to the spot. Then her blood began to tingle. . . . The terrible agony of the dog woke her to consciousness, to understanding. . . . Some irresistible and overwhelming instinct drove her towards the bedside of her husband. . . .

She burst into sobs, and falling upon her knees she threw her arms about the lifeless form, already cold in death.

THE BEARER OF THE MESSAGE

By FRITZ HOPMAN

DURING the winter of 1869, I entrusted my medical work for a while to two of my friends, and left Paris so as to attend the International Congress of Medicine at Moscow. The first sessions of the Congress were extremely interesting. Famous men of the day exposed new theories and discussed new methods which have been quite forgotten since, and I entered, with the ardent enthusiasm of youth, into the discussions that followed these discourses. In accordance with the tradition of the Congress, the delegates used to be invited in the evenings to dinners, concerts and the opera.

On the third day of the Congress, a young Swedish professor had been talking of the treatment of epilepsy by "mesmerism," as psychic medicine was called in those days. During the course of these interesting and stimulating debates I heard telepathy and the significance of dreams discussed by eminent men whom I could not but respect. Hitherto, I had considered such phenomena as inventions of the superstitious, but as I was on the way back to my hotel, I realized that the materialism of my young days had had a rude blow, and that it was time I revised my outlook on life.

I note these details, which appear insignificant, because I believe that any one who opens his mind courageously to a new aspect of the truth soon finds his opportunity in life.

That evening, the Governor of Moscow gave a dinner in honor of the delegates; it was an assembly of the most brilliant diplomatists and officers, of renowned scholars and beautiful women. When I think of this feast, now that I am an old man, I cannot help reflecting that all this is past. The passions are dry, the game of love is over. The young lieutenants of that day are now old generals, the girls, who were young and lovely then, are now bitter and selfish grandmothers. Doubtless, most of

the guests at that unforgettable dinner are now sleeping their long sleep.

I was sitting next to a Dorpot surgeon, who knew French very well, and I was absolutely in my element. I was still at the age when all hero-worship has not been stifled, and I lived in the timid admiration that a young man must have experienced later, when he saw for the first time Pasteur, Listner, Metchnikoff or Virchow. To my romantic mind, these great men seemed like stars in the firmament, totally superior beings. My soul needed some objects on which to lavish worship and service, and I fell violently in love with at least a dozen of the princesses and highly born girls, who seemed to represent all the finest characteristics of slow beauty and passion.

Moreover, I was conscious that, for the time being, at least, even I, was on an equal footing with the great men who were present.

Some one touched my arm gently. I was surprised to see a woman, whom I did not know, speaking to me in Russian. She was an intriguing creature, pale, supple and slight. The pallor of her face was remarkable, and lines of care marked it. Amid an assembly of such brilliant men and women, she introduced an element of sadness and anxiety. It was as though a window had been opened, through which an icy wind blew, driving snow into the room.

As I did not understand Russian, I appealed to the surgeon, to whom I had been talking, for an explanation. He told me that the woman had heard that my treatment of affections of the heart was excellent, and that she wanted me to attend a relative of hers, who was dangerously ill.

Impelled by a cavalier spirit, I answered that I was ready to accompany her. It would mean missing the gala dinner, but that was one of the chief reasons that induced me to accept, for self-sacrifice is one of the foremost needs of youth. Moreover, my pride was flattered because I was chosen out of all that galaxy of great men. However, I asked no questions but took my hat and overcoat, and set off.

I remember, as though it all happened yesterday, the sight I saw, when I went towards the door of the palace, with the woman who had spoken to me. At that moment, a girl in a

white mantle came up the steps to the palace. The light, coming through the open doors, fell on her face. I can see all that now, but it is like a photograph yellow with age, like a relic of the past that survives only in an old man's memory.

There is something pathetic, and also something ridiculous in memories of the past. The fine dresses of those days seem mere caricatures of fashions, and one wonders whether those women in crinolines were capable of love, and whether those men in frock-coats could die for the sake of their love.

We passed the row of vehicles, and we were fortunate in finding a *troïka*—the ordinary vehicle used in the streets of Moscow, and drawn by three horses. While the woman was talking to the driver, I observed him by the light of a lantern. He had red cheeks, and rough, furrowed skin, a thick beard and an insignificant nose, as all Russians have.

We took our places in the *troïka*, and passed through some streets that were brightened by light from big shops. After that we came to great deserted open spaces, where the outline of equestrian statues could be discerned. In places, the white domes of Russian churches stood out in startling contrast against the dark sky, giving a strange weird effect. We met no one but a squadron of soldiers with guns and a poacher. After passing through the dim suburbs, we reached the country, leaving behind us the light and noise of the old city. The quiet serenity of winter lay before us, snow everywhere, on the ground, on trees, on branches, and a perfect stillness which soothed me at first. But, before long, I became a prey to doubts and distrust, and I regretted the light and warmth of the palace I had so thoughtlessly left. I cursed my own credulity. The silence and monotony of the journey made me sink into a drowsy sleep. I felt detached, sometimes as though I were alone in the sledge, sometimes as though I were old, very old. I began to dread an attack of wolves, and I wished I had brought a revolver with me. I did not know what to think of my adventure, for in a country infested with secret societies, anything might happen. Was I walking into some trap? Was I not suspected of nihilism? Was I going to be robbed? But why not choose some one rich? I invented endless theories and rejected them all.

I was almost asleep when we reached a little village, where

lights were still burning in the windows of some of the houses. The horses were foaming and panting when they stopped outside a kind of inn. The door opened, and I saw, through a cloud of tobacco smoke, the dark form of a man in a tunic and high boots. We got out of the sledge, and I was glad to stretch my stiff legs. The driver was in conversation with the innkeeper, but the woman led me further on in the darkness. I had decided to defend myself to the best of my power if I were attacked. There was perfect silence all around us; as we made our way through the snow, we did not speak a word. I was greatly distressed, and my mind was full of the talk about the occult, to which I had listened during the afternoon. I thought of the stories my nurse had told me, when she was putting me to bed; of specters haunting newly opened graves, and I saw in my mind's eye tombs, coffins, black-covered lanterns lit on gray days, and all the fantastic visions that have profaned the idea of Death and made it hideous and terrifying. The black and silent darkness, the mystery, the icy cold of that night seemed to belong to the world of the dead rather than that of the living.

Finally we reached the garden wall of a dark-looking country house. I rang, footsteps approached. I turned round thinking that the woman was going to speak. To my great horror and amazement, I found that she had disappeared. I was alone. I could not understand how she could have vanished so quickly and so silently, but I had no time to indulge in speculations, for the door opened, and I saw a girl standing before me. I explained to her in French the purpose of my visit. She answered hesitatingly that I must have made a mistake, since all the members of the family were in good health. She asked me to go in, and speak to her father, who spoke and understood French better than she did. I was in utter despair, but I followed her to a kind of study, where an old man was sitting in an armchair, beside an earthenware stove. There was no need of a specialist to tell that he was suffering from some form of heart disease. His face was a bluish purple, and his nose was red like a drunkard's. He held a cigarette in his hand, and it quivered each time his heart beat.

I greeted him, and explained again the reason of my visit. The old man looked at me over his spectacles and frowned. Evidently,

he did not believe a single word of what I said, and he wanted to know my real intentions. To appease him and to explain my disturbing his peaceful dwelling at such an hour, I told him all the details of my adventure. He listened with eager attention to my story, and when I finished, he said:

"I don't know what to think of it. In any case, you are wrong. There is no one ill here. But now you have taken so much trouble for nothing, I should like you to stay for a while. You can't return to Moscow to-night. You will have to stay at the inn. I should be glad to offer you hospitality, but we do not receive visitors, and we have not many comforts to offer."

He passed me a box of cigarettes, and the daughter made me some tea with lemon and rum. Meanwhile, I constructed a theory, more or less unconsciously. I decided that the woman realized that the old man was suffering from heart disease, although he himself did not. She saw that the advice of a doctor was indispensable, and she had found a very cunning ruse to send him a doctor without being compromised herself. I should have to act with the utmost diplomacy, but after the fatigue of the journey, I did not feel at all disposed to it.

I asked the old man if he was well. He smiled and said:

"I'm sixty-one years old, and I have never been laid up in bed. Of course, weakness comes with old age. I'm not as strong as I was, and I have asthma a little, but, apart from that, I'm very well. No, doctor, you can take it from me, there's not a rouble to be earned here."

The conversation turned on the Congress and on life in Paris, about which he had read much. His daughter, a slight, shy girl, gazed at me with her deep, dark eyes, but took no part in the conversation. The father's conversation was witty and gay, and this surprised me in a hermit.

Probably my conversation brightened him, for he talked of his student days, of his youthful follies, and of the time when he was a young lawyer. For an hour he recalled his forgotten youth and talked of the good old times. Suddenly, the lamp flickered as though it were about to go out. I don't know why this impressed me so much, for there was nothing extraordinary in it. Candles were brought, but the charm was broken, and I felt like a young husband who suddenly sees an ill omen. The

clock was striking twelve when I took leave. The old man asked me to call the next day, and naturally I promised to do so. The daughter came with me to the door, and said:

"I'm so glad you have come, doctor, even though it was by error. Papa has not been so gay for many years. You must come back to-morrow. I wish we had a few more visitors. It would do him good."

I had a kind of presentiment that I should find my silent companion on the road, but I saw no one. Lights were still burning in the inn, and, when I entered, the innkeeper was reading the newspaper to some men, who looked like peasants, wearing Russian tunics. They had long hair and long beards, somber faces and they all sat in the same position, with their chins in their hands. Some were drinking vodka, and most of them were smoking.

The atmosphere of the inn was stifling and a cloud of tobacco smoke was rising slowly towards the ceiling. I made the innkeeper understand that I wanted a room for the night, by gesticulating, and he took me to a room where there was a huge bed.

There were some pictures of saints of the Greek Church hanging on the white-washed wall. The innkeeper brought candles, and lit a big wood fire. I did not want to sleep, so lit a cigar and sat in an armchair to think over the happenings of the evening.

I had just thrown the end of my cigar away when I heard footsteps on the stairs. I was terrified, for I was afraid it was a trap, and that I was going to be robbed. But it was the innkeeper and the daughter of the old man with whom I had spent the evening. The girl seemed greatly excited, but she did not lose control of herself.

"How fortunate that you are here, doctor," she said. "Poor father had scarcely got into bed when he had a terrible attack. Perhaps he's had too much excitement to-night. I'm sorry to trouble you, but would you mind coming with me? Perhaps you could do something for him."

The room into which she took me was lofty and uninviting; there was a sharp smell of eau de Cologne and of ammonia in the air. A lamp was burning on a table where there were the

usual things one sees in a bedroom, hair brush, razor, clock and a big tie pin with a cameo.

The last flame was dying out on the hearth. The curtains of the bed were drawn aside, and an old servant was praying at the bedside, while another was sitting on a chair, weeping.

I listened to the old man's heart beats, but there was not the slightest breath. Death had done its work, and the limbs were already growing stiff. I broke the news to the girl as gently as possible, but she had already understood, and mastered herself with a truly feminine energy.

While I was washing my hands and thinking of the adventures of the day, I noticed a framed oil painting. It was painted in 1830 style, and it showed a young woman with low dress and flattened hair. Without the least doubt, I recognized in her the mysterious companion who had sought me out in the hall of the palace at Moscow. My surprise was so great that I could not restrain a cry. The daughter and the servants looked at me in astonishment.

"Who is that?" I asked, pointing to the portrait. "It is the woman who brought me here."

The girl looked at me fixedly. Her upper lip was twisted in an expression of incredulity, but seeing me look uneasy, she, too, grew pale.

"It's my mother," she said. "She died when I was born, twenty years ago."

THE STONE BRIDGE ON THE ROSSITZA

By ANGUEL KARALYITCHEV

"I DON'T know whether I did commit a sin, mother."

"Tell me all about it."

"What do you want me to tell you?"

"For three whole years you have been ill. Three long years have passed over your head, and still you are lying there. The blackbirds have been singing on the branches of the wild cherry trees, and we have picked the ripe fruit three times, but you've not been there. Three times the wheat has been gathered into the barns. Just think, doesn't it all grieve you? Don't you yearn to breathe the open air, to see the trees and the fields, and your own fine bridge? You should just see the girls now, how they have grown up. You haven't seen them these three years."

"I don't know why, mother, but nothing seems to grieve me now."

"What do you mean by talking like that?"

The lamp shed its red glow gently on the sick man's face. The holy Virgin held the child Jesus in her arms and looked at Him with as much love as if she had never seen Him. Sitting on the truckle bed, the old woman fondled her son's hand; a great tear rolled down her cheek—it was a mother's tear. Outside, the night was clear and light. From the distance, the sighing of trees could be heard; they were swayed by the wind, and the sound was like the murmur of a prayer. It was the trees offering their prayers to heaven. Here and there, white roads could be discerned from among the foliage of the trees. The little gray cat looked at them in surprise.

"Do you remember, mother?"

"Remember what?"

"When I began to build the bridge over the Rossitza. It was

in summer time, and Milka had made me a white shirt, with red stitching."

"Yes, I remember it as well as though it happened yesterday. It was the summer you were twenty-two."

"People made fun of me. They said I could never connect the village with the fields opposite, because of the river. I should have to master it, cast a stone arch across it. Yes, I should have to master the river as if it were a child. And I knew I could do it. I traveled with Uncle in foreign lands for seven years, and we built houses for men to live in. I learnt thoroughly the carpenter's trade. And Uncle was very pleased with me. One day we went down to the river to fell the old poplar, do you remember it? We sat beside the river, and at our feet, the swift waters of the Rossitza rushed by, gurgling and rippling. Farther down, the willow trees bent their blue-green boughs and refreshed them in the cool running water. Uncle said to me:

"Listen, Manol, you must do what I have not been able to do. You must build a bridge, just here, from one bank to the other, so that men from the village can cross over to the fields opposite. The bridge is needed, for the fields over there are covered with rich harvest, and you have only to provide a bridge for the people. Then they will go to gather in the harvest."

"There was a bird twittering in the old poplar. We listened to it; and then I asked Uncle:

"Do you believe I can build a bridge?"

"I know you can. Bear in mind this is the right place. You must get stonemasons from Thrace. Don't be afraid, you need only call the people of the village together. They will be grateful to you for ever; no man can render greater service than the builder of bridges."

"The bird went on twittering, and its wings, silver in the sunshine, reflected the clear water. I was thinking, even if Uncle had not told me, I should have built the bridge. I saw it there before me. I saw it, mother, just as I built it afterwards. I saw it stride the river like a giant. The water dashed against the pillars, only to flow on free and unrestrained and disappear in the distance.

"I even heard the noise of a heavy cart crossing the bridge I

was planning. I heard the shafts creak, then my Uncle's voice brought me back to earth.

"When you begin to build, you must build into the bridge the shadow of that which you love most."

"I was startled.

"What—whom do I love most?" I asked him.

"You know that best."

The sick man was silent. His mother bent over him and her lips quivered.

"I'll never give you away, child."

The silver moonlight flooded the room. In the white lane, the shadows of the wild cherry trees chased one another as though in play. Night had stretched out her silvery carpet. And in the dark meadows in the distance, Saint Ilia walked abroad to ask the fields if they were thirsty, so that he should water them the next day.

And the fields answered him. . . .

"Uncle died and left me to build the bridge alone. I knew how to set about it, but what I did not know was that a human life had to be sacrificed. There was no one to tell me. It was the time when the storks were coming to announce the arrival of spring, and the crisp-haired stonemasons came and began to work. At first I felt afraid and yet glad at the same time, for it is no slight task, mother, to cause a man's death. What was I to do? What was I to build into my bridge? Eventually, the appointed day came. The two banks had been dug up ready. I was as if stunned. I thought that I should lose my senses. One evening I went to Uncle's grave, and throwing myself down, scratched the earth with my hands.

"Tell me, what am I to build into the wall? You know."

"The tomb was silent. Has the cold grave ever spoken?"

"I went back home, and in the early hours I fell asleep, and dreamt of Uncle. He had come down from heaven, and looked just the same as before, with his big red belt, his aba (traditional cloak of the Bulgarian peasant, made of white or black wool) across his shoulders and a great white eagle in his hand. He stopped on the high bank of the Rossitza and exclaimed:

"Watch carefully the spot where the eagle perches, that will show you what you have to build."

"When he had said this, Uncle raised the eagle and let it go. The white bird flapped its mighty wings and flew away to the skies. As it flew, it described three huge circles above the village, and ended by diving on to the roof of one of the little houses. It vanished like a stone cast into the water. I did not see it perch anywhere, and yet there was Uncle gazing at me; finally he shrugged his shoulders and went away towards the river. In a moment my bridge opened out before him, and he passed. When he reached the opposite side he stopped again, looked at the bridge from one end to the other, and I heard his voice again.

" 'Come on.'

"I was startled and I shuddered. You were there, mother, bending over me, and saying:

" 'Come, Manol, it is day now. The carts set off some hours ago, and the laborers have begun.'

" . . . When I went out of the house, I did not go towards the bridge, but up to the road leading to Noïou's house. 'If only I could see Milka,' I said to myself, 'to tell her everything. Perhaps it would relieve me!'

"When I reached Milka's garden, I shuddered with horror, for on the walnut-tree in the garden was the white eagle. It was the same eagle that Uncle had held in his hand. I grew faint. I rushed towards the cemetery to throw myself on the grave, to dig it up to find the bones of the dead man, and to ask him how he could take her from me. Was I not his nephew, was I not dear to him too? But, no, can any one ask the dead such questions?

"The stonemasons were singing by the bridge, the Rossitza drowned their voices with its rippling. But they did not fear the river. They sang and worked, placing the stones with their big hands that were furrowed with hard toil. And they were building in nothing but their songs. I envied their happiness, for what should I have to sacrifice before my work was finished?

"I sat down on the grave and glanced at the walnut tree in Milka's garden. A white cloud was fleeting across the sky. It was the pure soul of some angel, steeped in the freshness of dawn. What was I to say to Milka when I saw her again in the evening?

"I bent my head. There were tears rolling down my cheeks.

"I saw another cloud coming from the horizon but it was bigger and more golden than the other. I heard loud cries and the bells of a passing flock. Soon I saw countless carts passing laden with sheaves. There on the first cart, mother, was the very bird that had been twittering on the old poplar. It was now perched on the sheaves, pecking away at the grains of wheat. When the carts reached the river, they stopped, but the oxen were not taken out of the yoke. The wagons waited.

"Whom were they waiting for?

"I got up, wiped my eyes and laid my hand to my forehead: There was nothing to be seen down there, the laborers were still working and singing.

"Then I made up my mind, so be it. That evening at the well, my own Milka bent to draw water. I measured her shadow.

"There was only the moon to see . . ."

In the foliage, the little bird began to chirp. The cat raised its ears, and with one spring made for the window, but seeing only night outside, it could not understand.

The sick man was in the delirium of his fever; he thought it was perhaps the same bird, for the ring of the voice was the same. Yes, that voice had been singing in the old poplar before it was felled. This bird came sometimes in the night to twitter, and now it had come, crouching among the leaves of the wild cherry tree. The cat was still listening attentively by the windows. The mother still remained by her son, watching him, without being able to understand how his uncle had allowed her son to bring about the loss of his beloved.

"To the devil with the bridge! A thousand times, to the devil, I say!" she moaned.

Manol looked at his mother and said:

"Why do you curse it, mother! Didn't I decide myself to build it? Then it is I who sacrificed her!"

"You have committed a great sin, child."

The sick man's eyes lit up.

"Do you remember when we finished it? It was a Sunday. What happiness! What joy! Men had come together from nine villages to make merry on account of the bridge over the Rossitza. Bagpipes were playing. Do you remember? In the

fields opposite there was a feast, too, nine goats had been slaughtered. Before us the plain stretched out, pleasant and smiling in the midst of all the gladness. There were swallows playing above the fields. Old men looked at the bridge, struck it with their sticks, and touched the cold stones, saying:

“‘Thanks be to God, who gave Manol such a skillful hand.’

“‘How the good God had given it me, no one knew but myself.

“‘Every one was happy; others drank wine, but I was silent, and could not drink. I looked about as though I was stunned.

“‘And when the bagpipes played the Ratchénitza ¹ every one old and young danced. Some one called out:

“‘‘But you’ve forgotten. Where is Manol? He must dance with us.’”

¹ National dance of Bulgaria.

SEASICKNESS

By A. KUPRIN

I

At the port, the sea looked dark green, and the sand-banks stood against the horizon in a soft shade of violet. There was a smell of bad fish and of tar about the pier. It was six o'clock.

The signal for departure rang out on deck; at first the siren was hoarse, but afterwards its voice echoed clear, and it roared for a long time. Women put their fingers in their ears, and laughed, winking. Those who were talking raised their voices, but still their words could not be heard. When the siren stopped at last, there was the usual joyous animation that always precedes departure.

"Good-by, Hélène, my friend," said Vassioutinski. "They're going to draw the gangway. I'm off."

"Thank you," said Mme. Trouine, stretching out her hand. "Thanks for all your attentions. There'll be a moral renaissance in your circle."

"Thank you, my dear. You've bucked us up no end. We're theorists, book-devourers, and contact with you has been as refreshing as cold water."

By force of habit, he shook her arm as though it were a pumphandle, and hurt her fingers in his grasp.

"Don't be afraid of being ill," he went on. "At Iarkhaneboute, you'll be shaken a little, but if you lie down, you'll be all right. Greetings to your lord and master. Tell him we're waiting impatiently for his pamphlet. If it can't be published here, we'll get it through abroad. . . . You must be anxious to see him again, aren't you?" he asked, without releasing the woman's arm, and looking with an intimated shrewdness into her eyes.

Hélène smiled.

"Indeed."

"I see that well enough. It's no joke, you know, to be ten days without seeing one another. Adio mia carissima amica. My compliments to our friends at Yalta. You look lovely, on my word. Good-by. Good luck."

He went down, on to the pier, and stood just opposite Hélène, who was leaning over the edge. The wind blew through his black cloak: his height, his thin, ascetic form, his pointed beard, his gray hair showing under his wide-brimmed hat; all contributed to his comical appearance: he was like a good child, and yet there was something war-like in his aspect: a Don Quixote dressed like a Russian radical in the 'seventies. And when Hélène looked down towards this quaint figure, she remembered his extreme kindness, and his candor; she thought of the long years he had spent in the hulks, of his steadfast loyalty to the cause, of his perfect faith in deliverance before long, and of his great influence over the young, and she felt that there was something infinitely precious and admirable beneath the comical outside appearance. Vassioutinski had been the first to set her husband and herself on their revolutionary careers. And now, as she smiled at him, she was sorry she had not kissed his hands when she bade him farewell; if she had called him master, how confused the poor fellow would have been!

The arm of the steam crane rose for the last time, like a huge fishing rod, with a mass of trunks and cases dangling at the end.

"All ready," called out a voice from below.

"Draw up the gangway," came the answer from the poop. A whistle rent the air, the porters in blue shirts raised the bridge on their shoulders, and put it ashore. The water splashed and boiled under the steam.

On the pier, a little ragged girl with a dirty face, was walking about, offering flowers from her basket to those who were seeing off the passengers.

"Buy my flowers, Sir."

Vassioutinski chose a little bunch of half-withered violets, which he threw on board, aiming straight at the hat of a worthy old gentleman, who was so surprised that he began to apologize.

Hélène picked up the flowers, raised them to her lips, and smiled at Vassioutinski.

But the boat, obedient to the crew and the signals, was moving away, with cascades of foaming water spurting from the lower openings. Like a huge, tame beast, fearing its own strength, she slipped her moorings carefully along the sides, and made for the open sea. Hélène went on watching Vassioutinski for a long time, as she could see his head above those around him. He waved his brigand's hat, and Hélène answered with her handkerchief. But gradually the crowd on the pier grew dim and confused with handkerchiefs, hats and umbrellas waving above them like a flight of many-colored butterflies.

At Yalta, the *paschal* season was at its height, so there were many visitors. All the back parts of the ship, the passages, benches, capsterns and couches were crowded with people, and heaped up with parcels, cases and coats. Babies were crying, stewards were adding to the confusion by running to and fro unnecessarily; women were talking just where the crowd was worst, as women always will do in crowded public places; they hindered those who wanted to pass, and they would not move. It seemed scarcely possible that this chaos would ever be set in order. But gradually the disorder gave place to order, and when the boat was steaming at full speed, the deck was well cleared.

II

Standing at the back, Mme. Trouine gazed at the town that was getting farther and farther away, rising in white steps from the shore with a pavilion at the top. The line was visible, where the clear blue met the dirty green of the sea at the port. In the distance, there rose the chimneys and masts, like a bare forest, on the shore. The sea was rough. The water was bubbling, alongside the ship, in a foam like frothy milk, while, in the distance, a fine green furrow could be traced through the blue of the sea, with little white waves streaking it, like the evening in marble. White sea gulls were flapping their great wings as they flew around the boat, or came to meet it.

Although the boat was not rolling, Hélène felt that she had lost her appetite, although she had intended to dine on board. She asked the stewardess to give her a bunk, but they were all occu-

pied. Hélène flushed, and, taking a rouble out of her purse, offered it awkwardly to the woman, who refused it.

"I'm very sorry, Mademoiselle, but really there isn't a single place. I've given my own up to a lady. At Sebastopol, there'll be more room."

Hélène went back on deck. A strong wind, blowing from the opposite direction, made her bend down, holding on her hat.

A little red-nosed seaman was fixing a cylindrical copper instrument on starboard. It had a dial and needle, and in his left hand he held the roll of strong white string, rolled spirally and finished off with a little copper weight.

The seaman adjusted the instrument, let the weight hang vertically, and then unrolled it skillfully with his right hand, so that the string made a continuous circle; suddenly he threw it away in the distance, in the furrow made by the boat.

Hélène recognized the skill of sailors in the way he threw it to describe a long arc of a circle, and especially in the studied ease with which he set about the task.

"What's that?" asked Mme. Trouine.

"The log," answered the sailor roughly.

He turned round, and when he saw the sweet child-like face, he went on in a gentler tone:

"It's the log, Mademoiselle. The wing—that thing like a wing—turns in the water, and makes the string turn. Here's the needle, and when we look at it, we can tell how many knots we've done. For we shan't see sight of the other shore until to-morrow morning. It's called the log, Mademoiselle."

Hélène had been married two years, but she was used to being still called Mademoiselle; sometimes she was flattered to hear it, sometimes she was annoyed. She looked like a girl of eighteen, with her slight supple form, her slim hips, and her simple cream serge costume, and her straw hat with black velvet ribbon on it.

The second mate, a dark, thick-set young man, in a white jersey, was checking the tickets. Hélène had noticed him when she came on board. He had been standing on the deck by the pass bridge then, with a middy, a slight little boy who moved about as nimbly as a young monkey. Both of them had been watching the women come on board, pulling merry faces behind their backs, winking and frowning. Hélène had been watch-

ing their antics from a distance. The second—evidently a Greek—was the typical eastern fop: half-opened full lips; clean-shaven chin, dark brown eyes, brown like roasted coffee, with a languorous expression as though they were lost in a dim rapture. This was a type *Hélène* loathed, but she always thought it humiliating to pass strange men with her eyes downcast, and a guilty blush as if she were trying to look innocent. When she had crossed the bridge she had found the passage blocked on one side by this sailor, and on the other by a stout old woman, with a pile of luggage, who was standing in the way, breathless. *Hélène* had said to the man, as though she were addressing a strange servant:

“Please make way.”

She noted with satisfaction that her disdainful tone upset his facetious self-assurance; he hastily moved aside.

He came up to *Hélène* now, when she was leaning over the edge, and as he examined her ticket, he touched her on purpose; he held his hot fingers against her hand just a quarter of a second longer than necessary. She looked at him, and he smiled in a meaning way, then asked in a tone that was meant to be polite:

“Excuse me, Madame, but I believe you are traveling with your husband.”

“No, I am alone,” said *Hélène*, turning her back to him so that she faced the sea.

But she suddenly felt giddy; the deck seemed to sway beneath her, her head felt light. She sat on the edge of a seat. The town could scarcely be seen away in the golden haze, and it was impossible to see that it stood on a hill. On the left, a flat sandy beach stretched away in the distance until it merged into the sea.

III

The dark man passed her several times, at first alone, then with another sailor, who was in a coat with gold buttons. And although she looked away, she knew by intuition each time they passed; she could feel him fix his look on her, and she even heard him speak the words, which were no doubt meant for her:

“Deuce take me if that’s not a pretty woman!”

“Yes, not too bad,” said the other.

She rose to change her place, but her legs gave way under her, and she only just managed to stagger to the spare compass, which was covered with a cloth. She crouched against it, and noticed for the first time that the boat was rolling perceptibly. She dragged herself to the seat opposite and sank down on it.

Night was falling. A glaring electric light shone alone from the end of the mast, but before long all the lights were lit. The smoking saloon and the first-class saloon were brilliantly lighted. It grew cooler on deck, and a strong wind blew around Hélène and dashed the spray to her lips, but she did not want to rise.

A wretched tickling sensation began in her chest, and her forehead was icy. The deck rose slowly before her, balanced unsteadily for a moment, then fell back with a sudden shock, only to be hurled back again by the water. It seemed to be thrown up and then to sink back, and Hélène felt herself affected by these movements. Her body seemed to grow light and heavy in turns: it was the most horrible sensation she had ever known.

The town and the coast had long since disappeared; the vast horizon was visible. In the distance, the waves were foaming, and around the steamer, the waves were rolling into deep hollows, then curling round like milky-white shells.

"Excuse me, Madame."

Hélène heard a voice behind her; she turned and saw the obsequious second mate looking at her with his great languid dark eyes. He went on:

"Excuse me, if I give you a word of advice. Don't look down there, that makes you giddy. It's better to fix your eyes somewhere, on a star, for example. The best thing would be to go and lie down."

"Thank you, I need nothing," said Hélène, turning away.

But he did not go; he continued in a sugary tone:

"Please forgive me for introducing myself to you, without having the honor, but your face is familiar to me. Permit me to ask you a question. Did you do the last crossing with us, to Odessa? Ah . . . may I sit down?"

"Thank you," she said, without looking at him. "You are very kind, but I give you warning: if you try to give me your advice again, or offer me your services again, before we reach Sebastopol,

I shall wire immediately to Vassili Edouardowitch to have you dismissed from the company. Do you understand?"

She had mentioned the first name that came into her head. It was an old grotesque Turk, who had once saved one of her friends who was being pursued by a spy. The trick went home to the Greek, who rose with a jump, and raised his white cap. In the poor light coming from the saloon, she could see that he was red in the face.

"I beg of you. . . . Don't take it in bad part. . . . On my word of honor. . . . I swear to you."

At that moment, the deck began to sway to the left. Hélène would have fallen, if the sailor had not caught her delicately and unaffectedly round the waist. She said in a gentler tone:

"Thank you, but leave me alone. I don't feel well."

He raised his hand to his cap and went away quickly. Hélène stretched out her legs on the seat, leant her head on the balustrade, and closed her eyes. The sailor suddenly appeared to her in the light of a grotesque and harmless coward.

She remembered some absurd couplets her brother used to chant, when he was a student. It was about a ship's captain and a woman going to Odessa; there was a sudden storm, and she was ill.

"The very gallant captain invited me into his cabin, he told me to lie down and undo my bodice."

"Le capitaine fort galant,
Dans sa cabine m'invitant
Me conseilla de me coucher
Et de défaire mon corset."

She recalled the air, and saw again her student-brother talking nonsense. Any other time she would have laughed at the memory, but now she was indifferent to everything. She was depressed and miserable. She forced herself to think of Vassioutinski and his set, then of her husband and the pleasure of taking down at his dictation; she strove to think of the joy of meeting her husband again, as she had so often looked forward to it on land, but it all seemed dull and far away. She seemed to have no

part in it. Physically and mentally, she was conscious only of the miserable feeling of half fainting. Her feet and her head were in a bath of cold perspiration. Her fingers were so dead and flabby that she could not clench her hands. She dreaded losing consciousness. Suddenly her eyes swam, and her heart seemed to choke her throat; she had scarcely time to rise and lean overboard.

IV

For the moment she felt relieved.

"You would be better if you walked about, Madame," said the little old man whose hat had been hit by the flowers. He was sitting on a seat near by, and he saw Hélène's discomfort.

"Walk in the air and try to breathe as deeply as possible. That helps you."

But she only shook her head and closed her eyes.

She could not go to sleep easily. In two hours, she woke suddenly, and found her hair and neck covered with spray. It was a dark, windy night, clouded and moonless. The steamer pitched and rocked. A fine, slanting rain was falling. The deck was deserted, but passengers were lying near the poop, in order to be sheltered from the spray.

A lighthouse rose in the darkness, as though it were the end of the world; the lights shone, then went out, reappeared, vanished, only to appear again in a few minutes, at regular intervals. Hélène felt vaguely sentimental.

"Somewhere there, in the solitude, in the midst of the darkness and the storm, a man is watching over those lights attentively. Maybe, at this very moment, while I am thinking of him, he is dreaming of a heart, many miles away, thinking gratefully of him."

She remembered a certain night the previous winter, when she had been in the province of Riazan. At the station at Youma, she and her husband had gone into a sledge, with a presumptuous young driver. The snow was whirling down. In less than half an hour, the boy had lost his way. They turned into a field of snow crossed by ditches, then returned on their own tracks.

As far as eye could see in every direction there was the same

dead whiteness, monotonous, stretching away until it merged in the sky. When the horse was overwhelmed by the snow, the three passengers had to get out and wade waist deep through it.

Hélène's feet were so stiff with cold that they did not seem to belong to her. She was soothed by a resigned feeling of serenity. Her husband was silent, for he did not want her to know his distress. The boy on the seat had ceased pulling at the reins and trying to encourage the horse, who was plodding on docilely, with his head down.

Suddenly, the boy called out in a joyful voice:

"A landmark!"

Hélène had never been in such a desert before, and she did not understand at first. But when she saw a great pine branch standing out of the snow, and another showing up dimly in the gray night, she realized that Russian peasants mark the way thus for fear of distress, and she was overwhelmed with gratitude. Some one whom she would never see had followed this path in the day, and planted these simple landmarks left and right.

Perhaps this stranger had not given a thought to the lost travelers, any more than the lighthouse keeper thought of the gratitude of a woman watching the lights. Still, it was pleasant to bring together two souls, of whom one had left this precious trail, out of pure altruism, while the other accepted the gift with infinite gratitude.

The old red-nosed seaman came up to the log with all speed. He was wearing a mackintosh cape, and carrying a little lantern in his hand. As he passed back, he saw Hélène and stopped in front of her.

"You're not asleep, Mademoiselle? Is it the rolling? It's always like that here. Tarkhankout is the worst passage."

"Why?"

"Think of the disasters there have been here!"

"The water over there is boiling as if it was in a boiler. There's only a narrow channel left, because the promontory is on the other side. Just where we are now, the Vladimir went down. We ran foul of her. She's never been found. It's four hundred fathoms here if it's one."

Some one whistled from the bridge. The sailor ran to answer, but added as he went:

"Eh, Mademoiselle, I see you're not well. You ought to suck a lemon. If you don't, you'll be worse."

Hélène rose, and walked on deck, keeping herself up by holding on to the edge or to the door handles. She reached the third-class deck in this way. Men were lying about everywhere, on tarpaulins, on cases, on packages; men, women and children were heaped together.

Sometimes the light from the lamps shone on their faces, and in their restless sleep, they looked livid and green with seasickness.

She went on walking. In front, in a roped enclosure, stood some fine ponies, with glossy backs and manes shorn; they were destined for a circus at Sebastopol; it was pathetic to see the poor creatures standing sometimes on their fore legs, sometimes on their back legs, to withstand the pitching of the ship, and to see them prick their ears, as they watched the wild sea with astonished eyes.

Then she went down a steep iron staircase to the second-class. There all the places were occupied. Even in the dining saloon people were lying on the chairs by the walls, moaning, and their faces too were livid. Seasickness had obliterated, for the time being, conventions, and distinctions of rank. Often the foot of a Jewish agent would almost touch the head of a pretty woman, and the stuffy atmosphere was so nauseating that Hélène lost no time in going back on deck.

Now the rolling began again. Each time the front of the ship was heaved forward, Hélène heard the dull thud of the broadside in the water and the roar of the waves that sounded angry. A greenish mist floated before her eyes, her forehead was icy, and she felt a horrible fainting sensation. She leant overboard, and watched the somber deep, streaked here and there with white waves.

In this sorry plight, she felt that she would have preferred death itself to a continuation of the long-drawn-out agony. But as she had neither the will nor the desire to die, she could not have recourse to this violent solution.

V

Again the second officer came up to her. This time he stopped at a respectful distance and planted his feet apart, to be safer, and to balance in the rhythm of the rolling.

"In the name of heaven, don't be angry, and don't put a wrong interpretation to my words," he said in a courteous tone. "I am so sorry that you consider them in an unfavorable sense. Of course, I couldn't see you suffering. Please don't refuse my services. I'm on watch till morning. My cabin's free. Don't be afraid; there is clean linen . . . and everything you need. I'll send the stewardess. . . . Let me help you."

She did not answer, but the idea of lying still in a good bed, if only for half an hour, was irresistible. She no longer objected to the sailor's foppish appearance, and she could do nothing but accept his offer.

"Please give me your arm, I will lead you," he said in a caressing voice. "I'll send the stewardess and give you the key so you can undress if you want to."

The Greek had a pleasant voice that rang true and full of respect. It was just the kind of voice that never awakens opposition, the kind, too, that is typical of sensual seducers, who have fascinated many women, and played with them. Moreover, Hélène's will was weakened by the attacks of sickness.

"Ah, if you knew how ill I am," she said with difficulty, almost without moving her stiff, icy lips.

"Come, come," he said, gently, raising her and supporting her in a delicate brotherly way. She did not resist.

The cabin was very small, and there was scarcely room for a folding chair between the writing table and the bed. But everything was new and neat, there was a striped cover turned down on the bed and the sheets were spotlessly clean.

An electric light bulb with a green shade cast a soft light, and near the mirror there was a vase of lilies and narcissi.

"Please . . . in the name of heaven," he said for the second time, avoiding Hélène's look, "make yourself at home. You will find everything you need. My room is at your service. It is our duty as sailors to help the fair sex."

He laughed to show that the last words were only meant

in fun, by a simple cordial person who might sometimes be excused a little coarseness.

"Don't be afraid, I beg of you," he added, as he went out.

When he reached the door, he turned round and looked at H  l  ne loosening her wealth of fair hair. An instinctive fear, and a shred of caution seized the woman, but the room began to turn upside down, the green mist floated before her eyes, and the fainting feeling came over her again. Forgetting her suspicion, she sank on to the bed.

When the crisis was over, she pulled the cover over her, and undid the fastenings of her clothes. Then she reveled in the joy of stretching out and resting her tired legs.

She was better already.

"I will rest for a while, and then undress," she thought with satisfaction. She closed her eyes and the softened light did not hurt her eyelids. The rolling was less now. She felt that before long the very swaying would rock her to sleep—light, refreshing sleep. All she wanted was to be still.

There was a knock at the door. She remembered that she had not locked it, and she was distressed. But it might be the stewardess. She sat upon the bed, and called out:

"Come in."

It was the second officer. A shudder of horror shook her frame. The sailor's head was bent, and he did not look at H  l  ne, but his nostrils were dilated, and she could hear him breathing fast.

"Excuse me, I've forgotten the paper," he said in a dull voice. He was bent over the table, with his back to H  l  ne, and he was rummaging for something. The idea struck her that it might be better to go out immediately, but, as if he understood her thoughts, he forestalled her, and sprang like a cat to the door, which he locked securely.

"What are you doing?" asked H  l  ne, clasping her hands in her impotence.

With a gentle but irresistible movement, he sat on the bed beside her, and began to unfasten her clothes with his burning, trembling hands. His breath was a rattle, and on his purple face, two veins were swollen, and they met like a circumflex accent.

"Dear," he said, panting, and there was blind, miserable passion in his voice. "Dear . . . I want to help you. Instead of the stewardess. . . No, no! Don't think any evil. What a lovely body you have!"

He laid his burning head on her bare breast, and stammered, as though he were delirious.

"You must unbutton it all . . . it would be better. . . . In the name of heaven, don't think that I would . . . a minute . . . just a minute . . . no one will know. . . . It's only prejudice. . . ."

She thrust her hands at the head of her assailant, and said with disgust:

"Leave me . . . you . . . brute . . . you wretch. . . . No one has ever dared to touch me like that. . . ."

In her anger and fright, she began to utter piercing shrieks, but he closed her lips with his, and they were moist and fleshy. She struggled, bit his lips, and when she succeeded in freeing herself, she shrieked aloud.

Suddenly, the wretched fainting sensation overcame her, and her arms and legs were paralyzed.

"Lord, what have you done to me!" she whispered. "It is worse than murder. God! my God!"

Some one knocked at the door. The old sailor and the cheerful midgy, whom Hélène had seen on the footbridge, came in.

"My God! My God!" said the woman, hiding her face in her hands.

VI

Day dawned. While passengers and cargo were being landed at Eupatoria, Hélène was awakened on deck by the cool of a morning mist. The sea was calm, and the sun was showing red through the mist. The flat coast could scarcely be seen in the distance.

It was only then, when she regained full consciousness, that she remembered all the horror and shame of the night. She recalled the second officer, the boy, the second officer again. She realized with horror that the Greek had put her outside his

cabin when his lust was satisfied. And this thought was the most painful.

The steamer stayed three hours at Sebastopol, while the cranes loaded and unloaded packages, barrels, sacks, iron bars, and marble slabs. The mist had cleared away, and the bay with the golden sand looked delightful. Great black yawls were plying to and fro, and the smaller boats of the navy were moving swiftly along, with St. Andrew's cross on the poop. Bare-necked sailors were swaying back and forward in unison, as they moved the oars.

Hélène went ashore and went for a ride in a tramcar for some unknown reason. The white, hilly town seemed deserted, as though it were inhabited only by ships' officers, sailors and soldiers, like a conquered city.

She stopped in the municipal park, but she was quite indifferent to the lawns and trees she saw, and to the band she heard playing. She went back on board.

At one o'clock, the steamer unmoored. It was only when every one had finished lunch that Hélène went down to the dining-room, for a feeling of shame forced her to shun society. After her solitary lunch she made a great effort to go on board. Until they reached Yalta she stood against the railings of the deck.

The low, sandy coast began to rise gradually, and the sides were studded with dark patches of green. While a passenger sitting next to Hélène was describing the country they were passing from his guide book, the woman looked wistfully at the beautiful country of the Crimea opening out before him. She was still overwhelmed by the nightmare she had been through. The Cape of Fiolente appeared, red and steep, with pointed rocks that seem ready to crumble away. In old times, the temple of the goddess of slaughter stood there, and her victims—captives often—were cast down into the sea. Then Balaklava, with the dim outline of the Genoese church tower in ruins on a hill top, the moss-covered cape of Aïa, wooded Laspi. Phoros with a Byzantine Church standing out on the high ground, with the gates of Baïdar crowning the plateau. And there, among the green of the gardens and parks, between the windings of the white road, were villas and Iartas villages, with their white

roofs. The spa spread out calm around the boat; dolphins played in the water.

The sea air was strong, fresh and salty, but nothing cheered Hélène. She felt as though some all-powerful creature had suddenly taken possession of her body, to outrage it; as though, in his mocking, evil way, he had profaned her thoughts, shattered her pride, and destroyed her joyous hope in life for ever. She did not know what to do as she reflected over these things, in the same apathetic way as she looked at the shore, the sky and the sea.

Now the passengers were crowding to larboard. Once Hélène caught sight of the second officer in the crowd. He swiftly moved out of sight, turning his back, and vanishing in towards the poop. His quick glance, and even the way he shrugged his shoulders showed his contempt of her. She felt that she was bound to him for ever, and that she had been dragged down to his level.

After passing Aloupka, with its vast green palace, in Moorish style, and its rich park, they came to Miskhar, set in green, Dulberg, as white as though it were carved out of sugar rock and the "Nest of Swallows," an ugly red building with a tower perched on rock rising sheer out of the water.

Soon they would reach Ialta. The deck was covered with luggage, and passengers were getting anxious and bad-tempered, as they always do in the feverish rush that accompanies arrival and departure.

Hélène was pushed out of the way by one and another. Some trod on her foot, others on her dress, but she did not care. She began to dread meeting her husband, and to wonder what their meeting would be. Would she have the courage to tell him all? What would he do? Would he forgive? Would he be angry? Would he be merciful, or would he thrust her away as a depraved and perfidious woman?

Each time she thought of having to make the horrible confession, she grew pale, and closed her lips, sighing deeply.

She saw the well-wooded park of Oreanda, the noble ruins of the Marble Palace, the red palace of Livadia, the vines planted on the hillsides, and then at last the pleasant amphitheater of Yalta, the golden cupolas of the Church, and the dark cypress

trees like fine distaffs; and on the quay, there were people, horses and cars that looked like miniature ones from the distance.

Moving slowly and cautiously, the boat came alongside the pier. Immediately, the crowd of passengers rushed onto the gangway, like a crowd of sheep, pushing and pressing one another. Hélène hated the untidy look of the people in the crowd, women with hastily powdered faces, with hot hands and elbows pushing in a threatening way. She could have imagined that each person in this crowd was like the wretch who had outraged her during the night.

Once the crowd had cleared, Hélène went to the edge, and caught sight of her husband. Suddenly, his whole appearance seemed over-familiar, and at the same time hostile, unsympathetic: with his blue silk shirt, loose trousers, wide, white felt hat that social-democrats always wear, his short figure, his winking eyes, and his puckered face, he seemed so unprepossessing that Hélène wished she had wired from Sebastopol to say that she was going away forever, without giving any explanations.

But he had seen her from the distance, and he was waving his hat and cane.

VII

Late in the night, she got out of her bed, which was separated from her husband's by a bedroom table, and without turning on the lights, she sat at his feet. He sat up immediately, in fright.

"What's the matter, Hélène? What is it?" During the day he had been troubled by his wife's determined silence, and although she declared she had a headache, he guessed she was hiding some secret grief.

He had not insisted, for he thought the mystery would be cleared up in time, and now, suddenly awakened, he felt instinctively, apart from the commonplace wisdom of life, that something horrible was going to happen.

The two windows were wide open, and the strong scent of the glycines came in. From the Jardin de Ville floated the plaintive strains of a string band.

"Serge, listen to me," said Hélène. "No, don't light up. It's

better like this, without light. . . . What I'm going to tell you will hurt you horribly; but I can't do anything else. I must make you stand the test . . . forgive me!"

She could barely make out his white shirt in the darkness. She heard him fumbling for the glass and water bottle, then drinking in long gulps.

"Go on, Hélène," he said under his breath.

"Listen! Tell me what you would have said if I had come to say to you, 'Serge, your wife, who loves only you, has been betrayed to-day.' Think of it, I've been betrayed as utterly as possible by man. No, don't be in a hurry to answer. It wasn't in secret, but by force of circumstances that I was false to you. . . . Imagine it . . . the whim of an uncontrolled nature, irresistible desire, and the violence of a frenzied creature . . . a wretch. Serge, dear, tell me, honestly, without keeping anything back. . . . And bear in mind that I haven't ceased loving you more than the dearest thing I prize."

He was silent, and he moved to seek her hand, but she drew it away.

"Hélène, you've frightened me. I don't know what to say. For if you loved some one else, you would have said so. You would have declared:

"'Serge! We're two loyal and free beings. I don't love you now, I'm in love with some one else, forgive me, and let us part.' I should have kissed your hand, and said, 'Thank you for all that you have given me. I bless your name, only let me keep your friendship.'"

"No, it's not that at all. . . . I don't love any one else, but I betrayed you horribly, because I couldn't help it. It was not my fault."

"But he pleased you . . . you know the sweetness of love? . . ."

"Oh, no, no! Serge, all the time I knew only disgust, utter disgust, more than you could imagine. Well, tell me, if I had been outraged?"

He drew her gently to him, and she did not resist.

"Dear Hélène, why do you think of that? It's as if you were asking whether I should cease loving you if you were disfigured by small-pox, or if you lost a leg in a railway accident. It's the

same thing. If any scoundrel had outraged you, heavens, everything is possible nowadays! I should have laid your head on my breast, saying, 'Dearest, I pity you, as your husband, brother, as your only lover, and I wipe out this shame with my kiss.' "

They were silent for a long time, then Serge said:

"Tell me all about it."

"Imagine it," she went on, "but remember, Serge, it's only a supposition. If I had had a bad attack of seasickness in the night. . . ."

And, without omitting a single detail, she told him all that had happened during the night. She told him of her misery and shame, but she kept on repeating all the time, "You know, it's only a supposition! Don't go believing it happened. It's only a supposition."

When she was silent, he said in a low voice, that was almost solemn:

"Did it happen so? Really? I've no right to judge you, nor to forgive you. You're no more guilty than if you had had a bad dream. Give me your hand!"

He kissed her hand, then asked under his breath:

"That really happened, Hélène?"

"Yes, dear. I was so unhappy, so unhappy. I'm grateful to you for comforting me, for not breaking my heart. I can never thank you enough, if only for the relief of this moment!"

With tears of bitterness and of joy, she leant against her husband's breast, her shoulders shaking with sobs. He caressed her hair gently.

"Lie down, dear, and rest. You will be happy, when you wake up to-morrow. It will all be like a far-off dream."

She went to bed. A quarter of an hour passed. The fragrance of the flowers floated in, and the divine strains of music from the distance, but the husband and wife could not sleep. Each was afraid of disturbing the other, and tried not to move or sigh or cough, although each knew that the other was not asleep.

But suddenly, he sat up on the bed and cried out in a terrified voice:

"Hélène! And the child! If there were a child!"

She wavered then in a low voice:

"You would loathe it?"

"No; I love all children, I've told you so time after time, not only in words, but with my whole soul. I believe I could love any one's child as well as my own. I have always claimed that the exclusive maternal instinct is criminal, and that a woman who would sacrifice others to save her own, is a horror, although as a mother she may be sublime, or a saint, as they say. Your child, even under those circumstances, would be mine, Hélène, but such a man would probably have had scores of such adventures in his life. I expect he's tainted with some shameful diseases . . . he may be a case of inherited inebriation. . . . That's a horrible thing, Hélène."

She answered in a tired voice:

"Very well, I'll do as you like."

There was a long pause, then he ventured timidly:

"I want to confess one thing. I was only distressed when I feared you might have known the joy, the physical joy of love, from another, from an adventurer. Ah, why did it happen? If I hadn't taken you when you were chaste, it wouldn't matter, but this . . . dear . . ." his voice, pleading, trembled. "Perhaps it isn't true? Did you want to put me to the test?"

She laughed nervously.

"Do you really think I could betray you? Of course, it was only a test. That's enough. You've passed the test, so go to sleep in peace now, and let me sleep."

"Then it's true? Really true? Dear, my dear. Oh, I'm so glad! And I, like a fool, almost believed you. Nothing happened, Hélène?"

"Nothing," she answered in a dry tone. He moved a little, and then went to sleep. In the morning, he was awakened by a slight sound. It was light. Hélène, pale after a sleepless night, with hollow eyes and dry lips, was already dressed.

"Where are you going, dear?" he asked anxiously.

"I'll be back soon," she answered. "I've a headache. I'm going for a walk, then I'll rest after breakfast."

He remembered the scene in the night, and, stretching out his arms to her, said:

"How you frightened me, you bad girl! If you knew how terrified I was! It would have been a horrible barrier between us all our lives. Neither of us could have forgotten it. For all

that about the second officer and being seasick, you invented it, didn't you?"

She answered calmly, surprised that she could lie so easily, she, who had always been proud of her truthfulness.

"Of course I invented it. A woman in the cabin told me about it. It really happened on board once. The story troubled me, for I put myself in the woman's place. And I was so sure you would loathe me that I lost my head. . . . But, thank Heaven, it's all over now."

"Yes, it's over," he agreed, glad to be reassured. "But the idea that you would be degraded in my eyes even if it were true! How absurd!"

She went out. He slept until ten o'clock. About eleven, he began to be uneasy about her absence.

At twelve o'clock, the footman from a hotel brought him a letter from Hélène:

"I'm going back to Odessa by the nine o'clock boat. I don't want to hide from you that I'm going to Vassioutinski's, and you will understand what I shall do for the rest of my life. You are the only man, and the last, I have loved, for I shall never love any other. You are the purest and most loyal of men. But, like others, when you were in love, you were suspicious, petty and jealous, wretchedly jealous. We shall meet sooner or later. I beg, in the name of the love that existed between us, let there be no reproaches, no attempts to come together again. You know that I never change my mind. Of course the episode on board is a pure invention.

HÉLÈNE."

GOLDEN AUTUMN

By MARIE MAJEROVA

My memory often carries me back to a picture of an ideally happy couple whom I met when on a visit to Czecho-Slovakia. They were the pastor and his wife of a little village called Zablati, which lies in a valley by a little river surrounded by distant mountains. The steeple of the little white church can be seen above the thatched roofs of the cottages, and near it is the house of the Protestant pastor and a small school, now deserted and fallen into dilapidation. The stream shines white in the sunshine as it gurgles over the clear rocks and on the bank the sails of the mill turn rhythmically and the yellow pumpkins are ripening in the sun amidst their thick green foliage. The smoke rises from the cottages standing amongst the fruit trees, where the evening meal is being prepared.

I was one of a party of four which included two women who lived in the neighborhood—Vivostchka, a poetess, and a woman politician—as well as Dacha, a baby girl of a year old. On arrival we went to see the pastor who lived in a small cottage. The two rooms looked onto the court and the old beams roofing the kitchen and cellar were dark and mellow with age. Our approach up the worn pathway of the sloping garden frightened the hens scratching in the soil and scattered them in all directions.

At our knock the pastor's wife came to the door, hastily wiping her hands on her apron, for she had been preparing fruit for winter use. She was short and plump, very much like one of the popular Russian dolls made of blocks of carved and painted wood.

Though she had never seen or heard of us she received us hospitably; we were guests, and that sufficed. Even the rustic room had an air of welcome. However, we could see that she was embarrassed by the unexpectedness of our visit, for in a

Czecho-Slovakian household all guests must be honored, be it only with bread and salt. We could see these thoughts in her troubled gray eyes, usually so calm and aloof from worldly things. How could she show us honor? What could she say to us? These things worried her, but nevertheless her face lost none of the dignity which a half century of life had graven upon it.

Little Dacha gurgled to herself whilst we talked casually.

"What a pity that the pastor is out."

"Yes, he is with the old farmer amongst the birch trees."

"And you, Madame, do you not care for walking?"

"No, not any more. You see, I'm not as young as I used to be."

The old lady seated herself carefully upon the edge of a chair; perhaps in her youth she had been able to sink back into it, but now she was far too stout and looked like a small pear placed on the edge. Her plump cheeks ran into a double chin which rested upon her bosom, and her figure broadened out to her large hips without any visible waistline. On her gray hair she wore a fichu of black lace.

She continued to look bewildered, and her eyes roved about in an embarrassed fashion; she seemed like some little climbing plant that needed a support. We were afraid of wearying her and thought of leaving.

"Please don't go until the pastor returns," murmured the old lady. "You really must wait for his return. He would be so sorry to have missed you."

She offered to show us the little church in the meantime, and, throwing a woollen shawl about her shoulders, she took a large key from the sideboard, and we all walked slowly towards the church.

It was five hundred and fifty years old. Here and there the framework was falling to pieces. Over the altar was a picture of the Good Shepherd with a young lamb upon his shoulders. In the chancel was a small organ with carvings colored by some village craftsman. A portrait of Martin Luther was to the right of the altar, and to the left was an engraving representing Master John Huss. The old sacristy had a moldy smell.

The old lady showed us a stone proving the antiquity of the

cemetery. It was, we thought, the tombstone of one of the pastor's predecessors, for we could see engraved on it in Latin: "Pastor of the Flocks of the Lord," and an old, old date. We admired the church and promised our hostess to come back some day. Whilst waiting for the pastor's return we strolled through the park of the castle.

Dacha and I listened while Vivostchka and the poetess explained to us about the Czech farmers who have become Magyarized and have renounced their own people. The lady politician gave her views which did not seem to interest Dacha very much; the question of farmers left her unmoved. And she was right—the future of the Czech people lies not with them but rather with her and children like her. I made no contribution to the conversation, and Vivostchka went on to tell us what she knew about the pastor and his wife. They had lived together in perfect harmony in the same presbytery for nearly fifty years, and the half-century had rolled by sweetened by their never-ceasing love. Having no children to think of they had never left the village where they were known as Philemon and Baucis, nor even moved from the modest presbytery where the will of God had placed them. Now they were peacefully living out the autumn of their days, their hearts warmed by the rays of love's sun, which for them would soon disappear.

I thought of this immense flame which warmed these two souls so intensely that after all these years they still burned with the same fire; how powerful, how ardent it must have been to thus weld these two souls with such a solid link! How brilliant must have been its rays to blind their eyes to the rest of the world! How penetrating to have filled everything so that never once were their hearts empty and cold! The pastor must certainly have had other things with which to fill his life. Through the years he had guarded his flock, showing them the paths that led to God. Uplifted and animated himself by the divine fire, he had inculcated in the hearts of his spiritual children the love of country and of the language of their fathers, and to-day with a peaceful and satisfied eye he could contemplate his work amidst human souls.

But his companion, what of her? Oh, mysterious feminine soul! Had you no misgivings, when you, young and alone, iso-

lated yourself in this presbytery which must have seemed enormous to you, a child of eighteen? What dreams came to you from the mountain peaks surrounding the little village? Did not a vague desire move you when, wandering through the huge rooms with empty arms, you saw the animals in the courtyard playing with their little ones? Did not sadness tighten your heart when you first felt your youth passing? Oh, mysterious feminine soul! What has life given you that you have remained so contented in your mountain home, in this prison formed by the four walls of the presbytery, held captive by the love of one man?

None of us could fathom this mystery. Perhaps when Dacha grows up she will understand.

We returned to the presbytery to find the pastor awaiting us at the door. What a surprise it was! The expression on his face was the same as that which we had noticed on his wife's. Their figures were just the same shape except that he was on a larger scale, and they had the same troubled gray eyes.

He led us into the parlor as if we had been old friends, and about the room hung a mingled odor of coffee and smoke. He had just returned from his walk—he loved the birch trees in autumn! He asked us if we liked Czecho-Slovakia and kissed Dacha's little hand and insisted on our sitting on the sofa because that is the seat of honor.

Conversation began and after a few introductory remarks we found ourselves engaged in more intimate talk. I looked at the pastor's wife. Instead of the embarrassed and hesitating woman of a few minutes ago she was another creature, full of animation. At last she had found some one to lean on! She placed a little bowl before the pastor and others upon the tray and cut slices of cake.

"Would you like some milk, darling?"

"If you wish me to, dear heart," said the pastor, caressing his wife's hand.

Conversation continued. The soft Slovakian tongue seemed like music to us. Moved, I watched the elderly couple, who seemed like two lovers. It was not fifty years but five days that they had been married. The pastor turned towards his wife and

the little old lady, busily engaged, smiled at him tenderly from time to time.

When later we left, accompanied as far as the road by our hosts, the pastor wrapped a shawl round his wife's shoulders, murmuring gently, "Kata darling!"

While Vivostchka was admiring the birch trees and perhaps thinking of Tourgueneff; a verse of Pouchkine's suddenly came into my mind:

"Où, dans quel lieu abandonné
Oublieras-tu, mon pauvre fou?
Les petits pieds, où êtes-vous?
Où voulez-vous la fleur de Mai?"

As Philemon and Baucis stood waving to us at the crossroads we four modern women felt something of the bitterness of life. There was a woman who had solved its enigma. Despite all our questions we had forgotten to ask her the most important of all! But would she have known how to explain by what sun-lit path-way she had reached this glowing autumn?

In after years, whoever finds the tombstone of the pastor of Zablati will discover there two united hearts, even though they be not engraved by human hands.

LUDWIG ZOFFKE

By KLAUS MANN

LOLA became acquainted with him in a not uncommon manner. A friend, waiting for her at the stage door of the theater at the close of the performance, introduced her to an undersized individual dressed in a heavy checked overcoat. He bowed too low and while doffing his soft hat with a wide swing, he looked at her with dark eyes full of passion.

With hands plunged deeply into the pockets of her fur coat Lola leaned against the wall and returned his gaze from under the edge of her jaunty velvet hat.

"This is Ludwig Zoffke," said her friend, "who painted the picture of Joshua."

Lola thought that Zoffke appeared very uninteresting and with a rather cynical expression said, "So!"

A street lamp flickering in the wind threw its light across Zoffke's face.

His mouth twitched, his thick red lips murmured some formality, but his eyes held to hers with a craving intensity. The light illuminating his face showed a mop of unkempt black hair growing down into his forehead in a curious sort of way, and a flat ugly nose adding nothing to relieve the ensemble.

The friend left them together and Zoffke asked Lola to accompany him to a near-by café. She did not shift her position immediately but gazed at him with greenish tiger-like eyes until, in response to his hypnotic-like stare she took his arm and went with him.

He annoyed her by humming Italian arias in a deep-toned voice and by detailing the successes of his pictures at the Berlin Exhibitions.—"Tremendous ovations," he added with a wide sweep of his arms.

But, as they sat there in that noisy café, what was it that made her quiver whenever he looked at her?

Lola's vermilion lips smiled at her friends as they passed the table and she cast seductive glances towards every passer-by who interested her, from under her red-brown hat, and she displayed her well-formed legs, clad in modish silk hosiery, impishly.

The orchestra played, and while they drank tea from the thick white cups, Zoffke told her about his experience in an uncanny, low voice.

He recited the tales of his various love affairs. Of all who had responded to his love—none had been constant. He was always left more lonesome than ever. But "How beautiful they were," said he, as he closed his eyes in recollection.

As Lola listened silently, her arms lying listlessly in her lap, her green eyes grown darker as his tales went on, she reflected: "They all leave him because they cannot endure him. That is why he is left alone."

She thought, "Perhaps I can help him! I will be faithful to him—perhaps he can help me."

When presently he came nearer, sat down beside her, he asked, "How do you spend your time, my dear?"

She shrugged, "Well, what of it?"

Zoffke rose to greet two friends passing. One, an over-dressed fellow with a monocle, murmured something from his fish-like mouth. The other one was simply a carelessly attired, very dark person who said nothing.

Zoffke himself did not make a bad appearance in his closely fitting, well-cut dress suit. He bowed with some formality towards her and said: "Miss Lola, of whose renown you already know."

She breathed through clenched teeth—not wishing to display resentment. Languidly she extended her hand to the monocled fellow, who passed on, leaving a perfumed trail in his wake.

"How very disagreeable you were!" she said when they had gone, at which he responded, "Those are very nice young fellows who move in the best circles." She remained silent, but fire shot from her green eyes.

"He is really too impossible," she reflected. "How disgusting he is—no breeding, boorish, fat. I will just get up and leave him as soon as the opportunity offers."

When later, however, he asked her to go to his studio and look at some sketches, she shrugged and laughingly accepted.

A slatternly, wrinkled, elderly maid opened the door for them and lighted a lamp.

Zoffke opened the door of his studio and Lola saw an untidy place in rather bizarre taste. She turned away while he hid his soiled linen lying about.

"Why are you so beautiful?" he said a little thickly, and kissed her.

She said, "I am so lonely too, won't you help me?" But she knew he did not listen. She went on—she told him how hard life had been for her. How much she had suffered in the struggle for existence. "I walked the streets and let any one accost me because I was so lonely and could endure my life no longer. It was then I came to realize how heartless men could be."

But he appeared not to have heard her and, absorbed in himself, he related more conquests of his past. She did not seem to be able to shake off his hypnotic power over her, however, and she returned often to his studio.

She was forced to endure the sting of listening to the tales of his love affairs, his boasts of conquests, but he added, "They did not remain long—and I know why!"

She replied angrily to his taunts, "What am I to you? Every common person evidently means more to you. You do not understand me at all!"

He taunted her further by the remarks: "It is true they are more chic, they are younger and have no bursts of hysteria such as you exhibit."

Under this torture she came to despise and hate him. Sometimes he would appear interested—would call attention to her appearance. "Lola," he would say reprovingly, "why do you paint so? People will talk."

Sometimes they dined together in comparative harmony, or had more peaceful walks.

"How I hate him!" would be her constant thought when not in his presence, and then in spite of every possible resolution she would be like clay in his hands when next they met.

Lola knew that his spasmodic interest in her education, her character, was all a sham. How could this concern him? He

was so infinitely egotistical, so introspective, with his exaggerated ego. She would return sometimes to the plaint, "I am so lonesome. Can you not see I need sympathy and help?"

Zoffke attracted people by his uncanny hypnotic power, but he could not hold them, and they vanished, leaving him more alone than ever.

Lola grew to realize how useless it was to expect any aid from Zoffke, and as she could not love she learned to hate him. His spasmodic interest ended in the reproof: "Lola, why do you paint so much? People will criticize you."

Then rumors would reach her ears that he had spoken ill of her to his friends. To the fish-mouthed fellow he would say: "You know she is but a butterfly, her social status is of no consequence—she simply pursued me."

At times Lola would say to herself, "What does this man mean to me? He is indifferent and cruel—this disgusting common fellow!"

But no sooner were her resolutions made concerning him than she would try to make him care for her by going about with other admirers, but when they had departed, she would sit before her mirror and look at her impish reflection in it, staring at her face with its large powdered nose—its small red mouth—and disheveled hair.

One evening she passed Zoffke walking with a very young girl of the poorer class. She saw how he bent forward and embraced this girl so fervently that she was nearly stifled. Lola, standing unobserved in the shadow of a building, could see that he loved this creature in the same fashion that he cared for her.

In spite of all her resolutions she visited Zoffke late that night in his studio and when she hummed the strains of a popular song, he said, "You seem in good spirits, Lola!"

He attempted to embrace her but she pushed him back so violently that he fell against the table. Her eyes burned in their sockets like two green flames, in uncanny contrast to her painted cheeks. Suddenly she pulled a whip from under the folds of her black cape and lashed him across the face.

She showed no mercy in her fury and he cowered down upon the floor and begged for mercy. She continued lashing at him until her strength was completely exhausted, then she threw

the lash from her and dashed out of the room, burying her face in her hands.

Zoffke still cowered upon the rug and the blood trickled down his face in dark ribbons. . . .

Lola passed a sleepless night, apathetic, and rigid and then the despairing thought came to her, "If I could only hear his voice, perhaps all would be well again!"

Sitting alone in her room—immobile—her face bore an expression like a hideous mask. She cried out in her despair, "If I could only hear his voice again, all would be well!"

Lola suddenly resolved to telephone Zoffke. Trembling in every limb she gave his number and listened. After a long suspense she heard his voice, coming hoarsely across the line.

She pictured him standing in the center of that disordered room, with dreadful eyes and perhaps a streak of blood across his face. . . .

"I wanted to know whether you had slept . . . and to bid you good morning," she said when he answered the phone.

He interrupted her harshly and said abruptly, "Why do you disturb me at this time of the morning and upset the whole household? Spare me further annoyance in the future, I beg you."

That was all. . . . The receiver slipped from her nerveless hand. She stood rigidly against the wall. . . . Her head sank upon her chest. A loose lock of hair straggled across her pallid face.

Suddenly she saw the situation in its true light, the situation between them. Here was he, miserable, lonesome, perhaps with longing, but no courage. And here was she, and yet they could not be united because it was ordained otherwise.

It seemed as if her eyelids were weighed down, she was so tired—so tired. Slowly she sank down. She tried to raise her hands in prayer—but they were so heavy—and they fell at her side. Tears coursed down her painted cheeks and left little pallid furrows in their wake.

THE THREE SISTERS

By A. PANZINI

PISELLINO was a good-looking chap of about twenty. He had already written a volume of poems which no one had appreciated. He had tried his hand at playwriting but had failed. Then he bid farewell to the Gods of Literature and became a journalist, and in this profession he found the path to success.

A handsome fellow, he was responsible for the most dreadful lies. His pink cheeks and light-colored suits made him look like some Spring flower.¹

Most important of all, Pisellino learned how to wear a three-button cutaway.

Every one who knew him in Montecitori liked him, although Pisellino was not as straight laced as the city.

His specialty was interviewing. He managed always to get hold of the person of the day—and to make him talk whether he be a prince, a banking king, a proletarian duke, a cocotte, a mock celebrity, His Excellency, the Ambassador, or the King of Siam.

Pisellino knew how to penetrate the most ominous masks and to make their wearer laugh. They didn't say anything. It didn't matter. Hot air! Pisellino interviews were as trifling as the chatter of certain people. Moreover, what more did one need for a newspaper which lived but a day?

In the journalistic world of the capital, it was he who always managed to corner the man of the day.

"What sort of a fellow is this Pisellino?" they used to say.

"I'm like the clown who risks his life every day with acrobatic stunts but who never dares get out of breath, pale, or melancholy," he would reply.

¹ Pisellino, in Italian, means peas, or sweet peas.

Now Pisellino began to grow pale and when he was alone, melancholy. The dreadful specter of disease threatened him in the height of his youth. He did not want to believe us, but his ruddy features began to grow haggard.

"Pisellino," said his friends, "you overwork," and also, "too much night life," but they didn't want to say this to him. Instead, they gave him good advice. He should have himself appointed Ambassador, become the secretary of His Excellency—or of the bank president—marry the daughter of a wealthy merchant, interest the Princess in him. Any one of these things would give him a chance to rest and become a gentleman.

Pisellino was all alone in the world. There was only Lulu and Lulu's dog who loved him. But they couldn't speak to Lulu. It was all the worse because she was in a dreadful state. The Secretary of State had promised him to find her a job in the movies, and, instead,—His Excellency went out of office. The film company did not materialize, and Lulu's tailor became insistent for the payment of the bill.

"Mother of Mary, what a scoundrel!" said Lulu. "Pisellino, go and see that dreadful tailor and say that you'll take care of him some day."

One day somebody tapped Pisellino on the shoulder and said to him in a commanding voice:

"Pisellino, you must take care of yourself. No! No! it doesn't matter what you say. You haven't a right to think about it at all." It was the Managing Editor.

And so it came about that an automobile carried Pisellino far from the tumult of the city to the calm of a sanatorium—a sanatorium for children.

It was a well-built place, a huge white building in the midst of a green forest of pines and fir trees. But why was it surrounded by a white wall as high as the hills, with an iron railing, with cypress trees?

They seemed to say, "Children, this is the way in."

Children are like Easter lambs. They do not understand. They do not see.

Pisellino saw, and his premature happiness began to change to anxiety.

It was all the same, he thought, a foundlings' home, an elementary school, a high school, a college, a university, a house of prostitution, a marriage bureau, the Chamber of Deputies, a work shop. They were created by man in his wild search for something more wonderful, which he continues until the bitter end. I, Pisellino, am on my way to the office of the President of death. There winged Mercury will greet me and lead me on to the cemetery.

The automobile skirted the edge of the cemetery, then turned suddenly in the midst of a dense grove of beech trees and stopped before a door covered with white roses which stood on end like butterflies, giving out an odor of bitter almonds under the soft glow of the April sun.

The director, a stout chap of ruddy countenance, and the doctor, a tall man with a head protruding from his white gown, greeted Pisellino.

"You have come here not to be cured," he assured him, "but just to take a rest. You will stay with us, eat with us, and when you leave they won't call you Pisellino, but a little pig—you'll be so fat."

Pisellino wandered about wherever he wanted to, and ate with the doctors who always were joking and never spoke of their patients.

He had a beautiful white room whose whiteness was almost bleak. What a number of white-faced children there were. But they walked about slowly. Pisellino watched them, as, wrapped up in white gauze-like garments, they wandered around the grounds, like drooping flowers seeking to drink in the sun.

What were those other strange wavy forms which appeared and disappeared noiselessly, like phantoms?

The white head-dresses of the black-gowned sisters!

They passed and repassed. Sometimes one could scarcely see them. One never heard them.

They were like huge white butterflies had it not been for the dismal swish of their tunics—of their rosaries.

They reminded Pisellino of the famous butterfly called Atropos.

Why were they always in a hurry? Why were they always hard at work?

Those who were in the kitchen fried a hundred eggs in a hundred dishes with almost a magic wave.

Pisellino was amazed when he watched them.

Pisellino was not very painstaking as regards himself. Now in the sanatorium everything was unbelievably orderly. Each object was returned to its resting place as if by magic. Little by little, he discovered that the cause of this order was a sister—not the fat one who fried the hundred eggs, but another sister, of smaller form, and so pale that she seemed like marble, like the statue Pauline Borghese.

At first, Pisellino thought about his mistake, but then, he thought, what did this sister know about his thoughts. They were obliged to be prudish, and prudery was the motive which impelled her to put a man's room in order.

Nevertheless, when he was certain that it was really this sister, Pisellino felt a twinge of shame. He wanted to thank her, to catch her at work, to surprise her, but when he succeeded, it was he who was surprised to find himself face to face with a strange and wonderful pair of eyes the color of lapis lazuli.

Pisellino offered his hand. He wanted to say so many things but he could only say:

"Many thanks, signorina." To his astonishment she did not accept the proffered hand.

"It's nothing, Fratello," he seemed to have heard, and he found himself alone.

The sister had left but there remained behind the memory of the azure blue of her eyes and the refrain of the word, "Fratello" (brother).

He had never heard the word "fratello." It was always Pisellino, or Signor such and such, Commendatore, or Cavaliere.

The blue of her eyes filled the room with their glow. Pisellino thought, involuntarily, of the girls whom he had known in the night life of the big city. These girls, however, did not disappear as did the sister. It was as if she had been a reincarnation of some ancient portrait.

The tone of her voice had been so sweet that it was as if she had employed the old language of Santa Chiara.

"Is it so dirty?" Pisellino asked himself, looking at his hand. "She refused it."

He had a very nice hand, he decided.

"Don't you know," said the doctor, "that you never shake hands with a sister and you never speak to her?"

"But you speak to them, and give orders to them."

"Yes, Pisellino, I speak to them in order to tell them what to do, but otherwise they pretend not to see me. They're a hypocritical and disgusting lot, the sisters. You neither see them eat nor die. No one knows whether they have a father or mother. What is their nationality? Who knows? One head-dress may hide a duchess; another a peasant girl, but they never betray their secrets. They only speak when they are alone—and then what they don't say. When I came here first, I tried to find out what they were doing. I am Livornese, you know. Well, Sister Illuminata, the one who carries the children into the operating room, sponges and dries them, and puts them to sleep—"

"What a beautiful name," said Pisellino.

"There is a poem about this name: Sister Illuminata of the Compassionate, as beautiful as she is sad. I begin an operation and she takes out her rosary. What the Devil can you say to that? She never turns her face away from the table. I say to myself: 'Well, she'll have to be deaf.' I say loudly: 'Damn it!'—she carries on just the same. When we finish, she says to me always with the same idiotic smile: 'Doctor, don't mind me, say whatever you please.' The children call her the Holy Mother, but she's crazy. Listen, Pisellino, once I heard that she had infected her hand. 'Look here!' I told her. 'You must let me put some dressings on your hand.' Would you believe that we had to use force? You don't know Sister Anna. She's a Sadist."

The conversation made Pisellino tremble but the fat man was not easily discouraged.

"One day when we were operating on one of those unfortunate babies, I said to Sister Illuminata: 'What the devil is the use of putting these rags together? We would do better to put the child in a glass cage and throw him over Mount Taigeto as did the Spartans.'

"'God has created him,' she replied; 'we haven't the right to kill him.'

"'He created him to give us trouble.'

"'Because of our sins. But we haven't the right to do away with him.' "

"Then you don't cure?" queried Pisellino.

"But why do you talk that way? You aren't sick. You haven't anything wrong with you."

The doctor would have explained himself more vehemently had he not caught sight of Polifemo.

"Eat, Pisellino," urged the director kindly. "What, you aren't hungry? Milk and butter. Do you taste the butter? It's fresh every morning. We have seven cows, eh, Sister Illuminata!"

Sister Illuminata placed a huge white plate before him filled with luscious butter, but Pisellino only saw the contrast between the dainty hands, horribly stained by acid, of Sister Illuminata and the whiteness of the plate of butter.

He thought of the great Fedora's hands. He had written a story about them for his newspaper. Now, in comparison to the dainty, acid-stained hands of Sister Illuminata, they seemed paltry. How false was society and how futile. How much better the life which he led now!

It seemed to Pisellino that he had himself undergone an operation from which he emerged a changed man.

Lulu wrote him:

"Pisellino! Pisellino! Every one is asking after you. Every one! Come back in May. When you return, we'll drink champagne and celebrate. A kiss from Lulu."

"How sweet she is, dear Lulu," said Pisellino. "She still remembers me."

He wanted to write to her but he lacked the courage to express his thought in writing and he let the perfumed letter from Lulu fall at the foot of his bed, where it remained unanswered.

"Sister Illuminata," began Pisellino one morning. He did not feel well. There had been a trace of blood in his expectorations. He thought of his brilliant career as a journalist and was certain that it was at an end now. There would soon be only a coffin covered with flowers—and then—Amen.

"Sister Illuminata," he tried to say, but he did not dare. The perfumed letter from Lulu was lying on the floor and from his clothes there exuded likewise a faint odor of perfume.

"Sister Illuminata," said Pisellino finally, and his words resounded strangely in his ears.

And Sister Illuminata stopped her work for a moment.

"Tell me the truth. You were with the doctor when he examined me. Will I get well or not? You say that it is nothing. But you know well enough—"

And Sister Illuminata drew close to Pisellino and without a word kissed him softly on the lips.

It was a long languishing kiss. It was as if Lulu were drinking champagne from his lips. Sister Illuminata did not mind the blood in his mouth.

She withdrew as rapidly from him and Pisellino looked avidly at the brightness of her eyes and her omnipresent, half-foolish smile. She forced her lips wide open with her little hands, revealing a slight bruise and spit out the blood. Then she said sweetly:

"If you had been ill, I should like to have done it anyhow. But no, it isn't true."

"Oh, Sister Illuminata, Sister Illuminata," cried Pisellino.

But Sister Illuminata had disappeared.

And Pisellino tried to be with her everywhere. He grew better rapidly and felt a sweet pleasure in being near her even though he never addressed her a word.

One morning, he caught sight of her in the garden cutting off the grapes from the stalks beneath the hot sun. She came along the corridor a few moments later, her apron filled with the luscious fruit, leaving behind her a magic perfume like that of some rare spring day. The flowers she placed before the altar of Maria Addolorata and when Pisellino passed before the image, he felt a deep sense of reverence.

Pisellino was getting rapidly better. The pain which had worried him from time to time, had disappeared. The doctor who used to weigh him was astounded.

"You are as fat as a little pig, Pisellino," he exclaimed.

He felt so well that he lit a cigarette but the doctor snatched it away from his lips.

"Eat whatever you want," he said, "but don't smoke."

One day they served a particularly fine dish of *fettucine*.

"How lucky we are," said the doctor. "Sister Carmelita has made it especially for you. She has never made anything like that for us. You're a lucky fellow, Pisellino."

Sister Carmelita appeared a moment later but as soon as the men began to congratulate her upon the *fettucine*, she disappeared much embarrassed.

"You see, Pisellino," said the doctor, "she is a Franciscan."

And Pisellino, thereafter, whenever he saw Sister Carmelita, used to ask her if she never had been in love.

"*Oh, oui, oui, tres souvent la nuit*," she replied in French.

"Sister Carmelita, tell me, when you go out in the garden, doesn't Satan ever call you?"

"Alas! Alas!" replied Sister Carmelita.

It was in this manner that Pisellino pursued his innate love of journalism.

"Tell me," he demanded one day of the director, "what would happen if one of the sisters ever should take a fancy to marry."

"Every year," replied the latter, "the sisters have a certain day (I think it is in the spring) when they renew their vows. If they do not choose to do so, they are allowed to leave without any stain on their name, but if they remain, they must abide throughout the year by the vows which they have sworn to uphold. They are held in the strictest discipline. We doctors can say to a sister what we want if it concerns the hospital but otherwise we have no rights."

"Then, who governs them?" queried Pisellino.

"The Mother House is in Paris but I don't know where. We address ourselves to S—. We asked for three sisters; Sister Carmelita, Sister Illuminata, and—"

"The third?"

"You haven't seen her. You are asleep during her watch. She is only here the mornings to keep the books. And how she keeps them! Every time I see her, I touch iron as the Neapolitans say."

And he touched an iron bar.

Pisellino made love to Sister Illuminata. It seemed to him that she was enveloped in a halo of gleaming and supernatural light.

He made love as children do when they talk to their dolls. Pisellino appealed to Sister Illuminata's imagination. "You are wearing the hair cloth. Let me kiss the poor little fellow all bandaged up."

A certain cruelty made him torment Sister Illuminata. He left various objects of his worldly life on the table, the letter from Lulu, a vial of rare perfume, a small volume of Brantome's poetry.

"Have you ever read this?" he would say, showing her the little book. "You have seen it often, eh? You have touched it. They are all in the same place but I see that there isn't any more dust under them. Why don't you answer me, Sister Illuminata?"

Now Pisellino was ashamed that Sister Illuminata should make his bed so he tried to do so himself. The result was never successful but in the evening it was always miraculously made.

Now, it seemed also that Sister Illuminata always was looking at him.

He built castles in Spain of marriage with Sister Illuminata but as often as he thought of asking her to marry him, so often did she retire behind her sister's hood.

"But, Pisellino," he said to himself, "you are foolish to think of things like that. How can you love a woman under these circumstances?" Nevertheless, he felt a morbid pleasure in these thoughts.

May came with all its glory. The roses in the garden were in full bloom, and soon the petals fell as June approached.

In June there came the delicate cherry blossoms.

The almonds were white when Pisellino had come to the sanatorium, then had come the rosebuds, the roses, and now the cherry blossoms.

And Pisellino, dressed in a light-colored suit, had gone walking in the woods near the garden. The morning was hot and the freshness of the forest was most welcome. There was a small trail which led up towards a hill. Here it was that Pisellino wan-

dered in order to reflect on the possibility of marriage with Sister Illuminata. He would say to his friends:

"Gentlemen, I have the honor to present to you Sister Illuminata, formerly the duchess of Terraflorita."

His friends would reply, "Pisellino, poor Pisellino. You are joking. She's only some poor creature, not the duchess of Terraflorita. Perhaps she doesn't hardly know how to read and write. Pisellino, you are surely sick. We never thought you were already in your dotage."

One day Pisellino came upon a little chalet hidden in the midst of the forest. The door and windows were open. There was no sign of life. Pisellino sat down on one of the two rustic wooden benches which had long since fallen into disuse. How wonderful life would be here with Sister Illuminata. Pisellino approached the pavilion. He walked up the several little steps and opened the door. He did not dream of finding any one in this wild part of the forest. As he opened the door, however, he found himself face to face with a Sister of Mercy of indistinguishable age. She gave Pisellino a look which expressed utter distrust and said kindly:

"Come in! Come in!"

Where had Pisellino seen the white eyes of the sister? They seemed to recognize him.

There were several couches in the one large room of the pavilion and children lay on the three of them, while more active boys and girls played with their dolls.

The sister seemed like a giant amongst the children.

As soon as Pisellino came in, all eyes were turned upon him.

"Keep on playing! Keep on playing!" said the sister.

The children took up their play once more. And the sister herself took the lead in playing at marionettes. Even Pisellino himself could not help joining in the refrain:

Les marionettes,
Font, font, font,
Trois petits tours—
Et puis s'en vont.

When Pisellino left the chalet and wandered back over the forest road he felt a premonition of some great change in his life. In his heart, there ran the refrain "Sister Illuminata! Sister Illuminata!"

When he arrived at the sanatorium, he encountered the doctor at the door.

"What is the matter with you, Pisellino?" queried the latter. He said that he had just come from the pavilion.

"Oh, yes, that pavilion is called the sun house, but it could better be called the house of death, for the children who are there are doomed to die. They're the charges of Sister Anna. Touch iron, Pisellino, Sister Anna brings bad luck."

Pisellino did not see Sister Illuminata again.

Sister Illuminata was not there any more.

He asked the director where she had gone.

"Ah, my Pisellino, Sister Illuminata left this morning while you were sleeping."

"But without even saying good-by?"

"They come in silence. They leave in silence."

"But you, you must have known about it."

"Yesterday, I knew no more about it than you. Last night an order came from the Mother Superior for Sister Illuminata to leave this morning at sunrise. She left at dawn and, believe me, Pisellino, it's a great loss for us."

"But where has she gone?"

"Who knows? To Smyrna or Calcutta?"

"Tell me, what is her real name?"

"Who knows? Here she was called Sister Illuminata, but now she will change her name again. Only the Pope could reply to your question."

"Would you like to know why Sister Illuminata has gone away?" interposed the doctor. "Because Sister Anna had her sent away."

"And why?"

"You were in love with Sister Illuminata and she was in love with you."

"But we never spoke of it."

"My dear Pisellino," replied the doctor, "don't you know

that the sisters have their own radio system? I, for example, am a handsome man but the women don't like my beard. The director is as fat as a sausage and women have never liked fat men. After you arrived, it wasn't the same. All three sisters fell in love with you. Didn't you know that, Pisellino?"

THE JURYMAN

By EDMOND PICARD

I

IT was the nineteenth hearing of the case, and the last, because the jury were considering their verdict.

It was a Sunday, but there was no rest for the people of Brussels. After three weeks of legal proceedings, conducted with typically slow Belgian minuteness, they were growing furious against the accused.

It was in the evening, but there was none of the calm of evening to be felt in the murmuring of the people who crowded about the old Palais de Justice. They had nothing else to do but indulge their anger and curiosity and they were waiting for the eagerly-desired news of the death sentence.

In the Assize Hall, the atmosphere was stifling, and the light was dim when the semi-circular seats of the jury awaited the return of their occupants. Away behind the railings, a throng of muttering, swaying humanity could be distinguished by the flesh-color of their faces standing out in the darkness. It was the mob! Not a community of souls capable of pity, but a fierce monster, distracted by its thirst for blood. Just now, it had howled down the barrister who was trying to plead a last time for the acquittal.

From outside came the regular, sinister sound of iron on the pavements. It was the tread of a squad of police on duty outside the court.

The jury were threatened. If they did not strike hard, they themselves would be struck. For six months, ever since the crime was committed, the populace had clamored furiously for the verdict they sought, and it was not to be gainsaid. Armed men were arrayed, ready to support the verdict of the court, and the riders, stiff with the cold of the December night, turned

round and round in a monotonous circle, without any interruption.

In this vast drama that roused the populace to such a pitch of emotion, there was only one still, silent actor, the accused.

He had been to his cold cell, to endure there the long, hopeless minutes of suspense. Oh! how long those minutes were! And yet, not so long as these last minutes, with the horrible happening that had snatched away his life like a wild beast that overtakes a passer-by and drags him to its lair.

The warder's face could be seen from time to time, as he regularly passed the grating. The prisoner was well aware of the fury of hatred that was sweeping him into the abyss. The same penetrating intellect, as had shown itself in public to the annoyance of the people, now warned him of the imminent peril. Whether he was guilty or not, and that no one could tell, he was not disturbed by scruples, but he felt that whether he was innocent or not, his fate no longer depended on the truth of evidence, nor even on the ordinary customs of criminal procedure. There was no evidence against him, as his barristers had proved with brilliant clearness. No, he had only the frenzy of public opinion against him. He was not so much a prisoner appearing before his judges as a prey, a victim, pursued by a ravenous horde.

Suddenly a bell rang.

It was the end. The jury had come to a decision.

There was a significant pause, without a sound or a breath, but, outside, the regular tread of the police force.

The members of the jury filed in one by one through the narrow door, without looking at any one. There was a strained and sinister expression on their faces, and they sat down, as though they were strangers to one another.

The foreman of the jury rose unsteadily, holding in his left hand the verdict he was to read, and feeling with his right for the position of his heart, which, according to the law, he should touch as he was reading. And he pronounced:

"On the first question, YES: on the second question, YES."

These two decisive words seemed to fall with a heavy thud, like blows of the hammer.

There rose from the crowd a vast, wild clamor, and a moment afterwards, it was reëchoed by the crowd outside. The sound of the horses' tread was drowned, and in its dreadful loudness, it reached the prisoner in his cell. His head was swimming, and there was only one clear idea in the dim chaos of his thoughts. And then the darkness grew red with the blood of slaughter; there were two thunderbolts, and rage, wild rage, instead of blank despair.

He was taken in, and thrust onto his stool, while the clerk, somber and impartial, read the two replies, and repeated the two affirmatives that cursed the assassin and marked him out to pay the death penalty.

He listened with every muscle in his lean body taut, with his bloodless face livid, his eyes burning under their shaggy brows like flames, and a scar from his temple to his lips suddenly became blood red. Then with a desperate effort, throwing out his arm as though he held a poisoned weapon he cried out to the jury in a voice that was more thunderous than the clamor of the crowd, "I CURSE YOU ! ! !"

They shuddered and winced as they would before a volley of shot. The face of the condemned man looked hypnotized, diabolical now, and the picture of his foaming mouth uttering those frantic words was engraved forever on their memories. Although he was conquered, he could still scorch, and all grew pale before the fire of his wrath.

After a moment of disorder, the judicial machine went on acting on its impartial pitiless way.

But the atmosphere was not so full of arrogant assurance as before. The dramatic incident had left a trace of anxiety and doubt. The prisoner's cry, his rending protest, still rang harsh and haunting in the ears of those who heard it.

No one paid any attention when the President read out the dreadful formula:

"Every one guilty of assassination shall be condemned to death. Every one condemned to death shall be beheaded."

The hall cleared as the people went out murmuring.

Doctor Larbalestrier had been among the jury.

He had just come out of the Palais, and paused under the arch at the top of the great staircase that looks down on the square. In spite of the time of night, the square was alive with people. No one could pass through the crowd, and in the distance, the rue de l'Hôpital was thronged with the same sinister swarms of people, who were bent on seeing the prison van take the condemned man to the prison at Petits Carmes.

The escort dared not go out, for the authorities were afraid lest the van should be pulled to pieces during its slow progress through the mob and the prisoner torn limb from limb. In a corner on his left, the doctor saw that policemen were guarding the great door, kept half open to allow free passage.

He stood in the shadow, simply watching at first, then drawn to reflection.

The curse?

He thought of the curious coincidences that had conspired to drag him into this affair. Doctors are generally passed over when the lots are drawn for jury, but, by some accident, his name had been left on the list, his lot had fallen for this session and his turn had come for this case. Four times, over, fate had chosen him and kept him. When he saw the prisoner at the first hearing, he was struck by the resemblance between his nature and his own—both were dry, highly strung, nervy. The prisoner's age was the same as his own, thirty-five. And one of his Christian names was the doctor's, Pierre. The doctor began to feel uncomfortable about it, but, before long, the intense interest of the case engrossed him.

His keen, avid intellect followed the speeches closely. It had been the means of making him famous at the University of Brussels, where he had won quite a halo of eccentricity, and as a juryman, he was attentive to every detail; he took notes and asked questions. The prisoner soon realized that this was his most formidable enemy, and a duel began between the two. The doctor's conviction was formed inalterably; the man was guilty, the man was a murderer. He knew the truth by a kind of power of intuition, which often guided him in scientific researches; he was inexorable. A witness examined and cross-examined, recalled and sounded in every way by plaintiff and defendant, de-

clared steadfastly that he had seen the prisoner coming out of the house where the crime was committed, on the very night, and that he recognized him . . . by the scar. The alibi they had brought forward was not convincing, but the evidence of a calm, reliable, upright man seemed irrefutable. He sought only to collect the evidence that confirmed the man's statement, and often, while he was disentangling the confused statements made, his eyes met the prisoner's, and they exchanged steely glances. The curse, too, was directed specially at him! . . . What did it matter to him? He had done his duty. He had decided according to his own private conviction. In the room, one of the jury-men had asked him, when it came to voting, as though he were seeking a favor, "What am I to do?" And he had answered briefly and firmly, "Answer yes." Still, he was struck with shock when he learnt that the verdict was eight against four. EIGHT . . . so the prisoner's fate had depended on his vote and his neighbor's, who had asked his advice.

Eight! So there were some who doubted. And this thought and the number kept on worrying him, haunting him continually, eight! eight! . . . During the last formality, the same monosyllable kept recurring to his lips like the swing of a pendulum: eight, eight! . . . eight! eight! . . . And in the distance he heard the curse die away. There was a bitter taste in his mouth, but when he went out into the air, he was soothed. His resolution became firm again: decidedly, he had done his duty in remaining inflexible. Four others, indeed, had thought differently. But with him, there were eight . . . eight! In the dim background of his memory, there recurred now and again, the picture of a shield on the opposite wall of the court. It showed justice, stern and impartial, defending her honor at the point of a sword.

That curse? . . .

Suddenly there was a cloud of dust, and shouts rose before the gate that the mounted police were guarding.

It had just been opened. The prison van could be seen in the space lit by the dim flicker of lanterns. Under the hood over the seat sat the coachman, a little, old man, holding the reins, with the whip raised, ready to see the horses off. An officer called out in a loud and threatening voice to the crowd.

"Away with you! Take care!"

Swords were drawn. Pricked by the spurs, the horses were prancing and rearing; they were going to dash forward, and instinctively the human mass moved aside to make way. "Forward!" commanded the same voice. The police spurred on their horses, and the old man whipped on his with fury. They set off like one man. The crowd hooted in a menacing way, and their voices were reëchoed in the murmurs that came from the winding side streets. The van passed the bottom of the steps on which Larbalestrier was standing. The back wheels of the vehicle struck a wall at the turning into the rue de Pujsbrock, and horrible howls and cries were heard. One of the men in the crowd slipped under the horses' heads and hammered frantically on the prison van with a brick. The dreadful din drowned the tumult of the crowd and terrified the prisoner inside. He clutched the sides with his two hands, horror-stricken by this frenzied nightmare. Behind, the crowd rushed on, shrieking and swirling from side to side, like the waters flowing back over the furrow of a steamer. The van and escort disappeared in the steep narrow way that leads to Petits Carmes.

On the square there were still a few curious people remaining, scattered like lonely clouds in the sky after a storm.

II

It was one o'clock in the morning.

The citizens were going home in scores, filling the streets with the sound of their steps and of their talk. It was as though the audience had just come out of a huge theater, or the spectators from a coliseum after a slaughter of gladiators and wild beasts.

Pierre Larbalestrier made his way alone, in thought.

That curse? . . .

It was true that his upright nature told him he had done his duty. The figure in the symbol haunted him and declared itself his stern and silent emblem. But the accumulation of unexpected and tragic sights undermined his conviction, although he strove to maintain his decision in spite of all. By a wretched trick of subconscious weakness, every time he said:

"I have done my duty," he heard, mechanically as the ticking of a clock from some dim beyond, "Eight, eight! . . ."

Doubt?

Yes, he was conscious of doubt, a vague unformed hesitation, like a star flickering in the most cloudy distances of the visible firmament. And this doubt, irksome as it was to his pride, arose from the cowardice of four bourgeois, who were afraid of losing their sleep, and preferred to be cautious beforehand, and vote in the negative.

He reached the rue du Marais, and the huge, old house his father had left him. His father, the renowned lawyer, was always for the acquittal, he remembered. It was a kind of professional mania, a narrow form of esprit de corps with him.

He opened the door, thinking every one inside was asleep. But no, Catherine, the servant, who dated from his father's time, was waiting for him, crouching on the granite steps in the porchway. She was consumed with anxiety about the issue of the trial.

She rose quickly. "Well, Monsieur Pierre?"

"Well, we've condemned him."

"To death?"

"To death."

"How dreadful!" said the old woman. "It looked to me as though he was innocent."

The Doctor shuddered. Another!

Annoyed by the contradiction that had escaped from this simple soul, he was going to give a harsh reply, when a most alarming phenomenon occurred: just for a moment he caught sight of the prisoner's transparent form, with an infinitely sad expression. It rose between him and the servant and vanished again. And he heard the sound of a kiss, as though the vision wanted to recognize the kindly pity of this humble old woman.

The juryman could still smell the odor of the courts, and the same bitter taste was in his mouth. Carried away by passion, he asked:

"What are you wiping your forehead for?"

"I don't know," said the terrified woman.

"Have you seen anything or felt anything?"

"No, nothing . . . nothing . . ." and she winced before his wild-eyed look. Then she went on, stammering:

"What's the matter with you, Monsieur Pierre? I've never seen you like this before."

He rubbed his eyes feverishly.

"You're right," he said. And then, in a gentler tone, "Come upstairs with me. You shall put me to bed as you used to when I was little."

He went to bed in his father's room, where his father had died ten years before. The old servant sat watching him anxiously by the flickering flame of the night light.

Sleep came to him amid the cares and horrors that haunted him.

"What is the time?" he asked.

"Two o'clock."

He went to sleep and fell straightway into the incoherent mystery of dreams. He lived all the trial over again, first the day when he heard of the terrible event, then the conjectures in the newspapers, and the various incidents that had helped to rouse public interest. Now he was at the Assizes, among the jury, listening to the speeches, and always there was a hideous skeleton before his eyes, with the prisoner's head. When he wanted to vote against the sentence, the skeleton made him vote for it. It jeered, and then vanished in the darkness. He was under one of the arches of the Palais, breathing with relief the icy December air.

The crowd was murmuring and swaying as the prison cab passed with its escort of mounted police. One of them seized him by the scruff of the neck as he was passing and caught him up, strangling him in his grasp. Inside the cab was the phantom, with the prisoner's face, clapping its bony hands, and jeering in horrible glee. He was being dragged along the street, and trampled underfoot, when he woke up, uttering a terrible shriek.

He was lying face downwards, with his arms stretched out. Catherine was standing beside him in fright, thumping his shoulders.

When he turned round, he was livid, and his pulse was fast; his eyes were wild and he was muttering confusedly.

"Oh, Monsieur Pierre," exclaimed the old servant, "what is

the matter with you?" And she rubbed his hands to try and bring him to himself.

He sighed and asked what the time was.

"A quarter past two," she answered.

A quarter past two. And it was two o'clock when he fell asleep. So he had lived through all that agony in a quarter of an hour! The strange psychical phenomenon reminded him that he had heard that drowning men see their whole life in the space of a few seconds!

He sighed again.

"Catherine," he said, "that's what you get for playing the judge."

"If you feel like that about it," she retorted naïvely, "what about the other man?"

It was a shock. *The other man*. Always the other. The poor old woman had unintentionally reopened the wound.

"I wonder which is more awful: to be the judge or the condemned?"

"Go away," he went on. "Go away, but don't put the light out."

The man was afraid, in spite of all his science. Being a doctor, he knew that night is the time for hallucinations, and that they are more intense in the darkness. And that curse?

The late dawn of a winter day found him thoughtful and calm in spite of the violent shock of the night.

He realized that he had experienced one of the hallucinations that happen at times in the lives of those who are perfectly sane, and he knew that the root of the trouble could be easily eradicated. Such childish night fears belonged to feeble natures, not to his, for he was proud of his strength of mind and of his determination. He was determined to conquer in this struggle against madness.

He rose. The bell of Saint Gudule was chiming the hour; he counted . . . eight. Eight! Ill-omened number!

He was working at the Hospital Saint-Jean, and giving lectures at the University. He watched himself anxiously, but there was nothing, nothing, and in the night? Nothing. He had regained his balance, and his mind was at rest.

He began thinking of *the other man*. The newspapers were still discussing the case, and it was said that he steadfastly declared his innocence. He had some supporters among the public, but the majority were against him.

The juryman could not but think of him continually, although he never spoke of him, and a strange incident lent peculiar significance to the anxiety that consumed him.

One evening he was going up to the rue Loxum, when he met some one who gave him the impression that he was scarred like . . . the other. It was a shock. He watched the man pass, then decided to follow him. He caught him up, and found that it was a red-brown scar from the lips to the temple . . . but no . . . a strange play of light . . . no, no! He passed . . . it was a cigar, that, from a distance, looked like a scar.

Ah! what if the witness who had given evidence at the Assizes had been mistaken too!

Like a cancer, at first unsuspected, but growing, growing until it torments and eats away the life, this doubt grew in him, gnawed at him, left him in peace neither day nor night. He reflected that there was no certain evidence. It was circumstantial. He questioned the certainty of his own conviction at the time of the trial. After all, perhaps he, too, had been carried away by prejudice and passion. His conviction had been personal, but maybe . . . it was groundless, but when he began to examine his scruples and his memories, he found that there was no undiluted element that could withstand the fire of his doubt.

He dared not speak of his weakness, but he wished none the less ardently for the repeal of the sentence, and he remembered the Palais saying: "Those who are judged twice have good luck." But a magistrate, discussing the chances in this particular case, had remarked, "There's no repeal in cases like this."

He waited, and his anxiety grew more and more intense. The hallucinations had not occurred again, but the feverish anxiety that consumed him could lead to nothing but a relapse.

The appeal was to be heard in February. One day he read in a newspaper that the date was fixed for . . . the eighth! That cursed number again! Why should chance persist in torturing

him? He dared not go near the Palais on the appointed day, he dared not ask the result of the appeal, for some instinctive terror made him shun the final act in the drama of the trial. It was only another act in his own personal, terrifying drama.

He heard the issue of the trial from a friend, who met him, and said to him:

"Well, your man's been condemned. His appeal was refused. How do you like the idea?"

The juryman looked at his friend, stupefied, then, without saying a word, went on his way, stumbling blindly.

The struggle was beginning again!

Without knowing how he found the way, he reached home. The garden was lit only by the moonlight. Larbalestrier was petrified.

There, in front of him, the condemned man was standing, lean and haggard with his back turned and his face to the wall, looking . . . at what? Then he thought he heard his voice, as he had heard it at the Assizes, when he interrupted witnesses, but now . . . he was talking to an *invisible being*.

His blood was frozen in his veins, and he felt the horrible shudder he had known as a child, when he sat up in bed, at night, and saw spectres in the clothes hanging by the wall. He realized that the voice was that of a passer-by, and laughed at his own folly, pure illusions! The doctor tried to reassure the man in him; fear and remorse, coupled with darkness, often produce such phenomena when a man has been preoccupied with one train of thought, or brooding over one subject, for the mind is in such a state that it transforms the most familiar objects and sights into phantoms.

Yes, but the doctor in him had to admit that phenomena of that kind are the forerunners of hallucination and that the intellect gradually loses ground and yields to madness. When a man is subject to terrors and superstitions, the most fantastic and far-fetched ideas become realities. They buzz and flutter about the human brain like insects in summer; and sometimes, they alight and devour. And those men who struggle to maintain the mastery of themselves are the prey of unceasing terrors and fears. They wear themselves out in the battle and they end by losing the energy and clearness of their minds.

He sought further back for the anterior causes of his state, because he had acquired the habit of searching analysis in the pursuit of his profession. He thought of his father and his mother, from whom he had inherited an intensely sensitive nature, and a tendency to melancholy, liable to sudden access of passion and enthusiasm. His education had been capricious, for he had been subjected to stern discipline after a period of neglect, when he had been left to indulge in wild fancies and extravagant ideas without any supervision. His father was always striving after the unattainable and the ideal, while his marvelous eloquence excused his eccentricity and extravagances in the eyes of his contemporaries. His mother, the famous singer, had been fascinated by the magnificent and remarkable behavior of his father, but she had left him, after a few months of passionate love, mingled with quarrels and disharmony, for Pierre Larbalestrier was a natural son. He had only spent his early childhood with his mother, for, when she perished in a theater fire, his father had lost no time in claiming his son, and it was with his eccentric bachelor father that he had grown up, and his education had been entrusted to various odd masters.

He had at one time been proud of this upbringing, which placed him for ever outside the pale of the humdrum middle class. It had contributed to his proud independence of spirit, and crowned him with a halo of mystery, but now it seemed fatal to him. He had inherited the elements of his personality from two strange and ill-assorted natures, and he had known neither restraint nor sympathy in a slack education, so that heredity and upbringing conspired to make his battle more difficult. He wondered whether this tragedy was mere chance, or whether it was a punishment. He indulged in petty superstitions: when he was lighting the gas, the match went out twice, so he decided that if it went out a third time, *he* must be innocent. It went out. Larbalestrier shuddered. Sometimes he thought he was simply the plaything of an ironical fate, a mere worm compared with the vast machinery of the universal laws. Other times, he admitted his own responsibility, and confessed that he was guilty of hasty judgment against the wretch who haunted him. Was the loss of his own reason not too much of an expiation for the crime?

III

He tried to wash his hands of the whole affair, but he was haunted. He knew no peace. The newspapers went over the case time after time, and some demanded that an exception should be made to the Belgian custom of committing to death sentence, because the crime was so atrocious. Yes, if he was guilty of it? But was he guilty?

That was always the insoluble problem.

In the end, the prisoner's life was spared, and he was transferred to the convict prison at Louvain to begin his eternity of living death. The juryman could not rid himself of doubts about his innocence, and his mind was open to the invasions of all kinds of distorted and wild visions.

At twilight he used to see the sinister form emerge from the shadows, at street corners or in leafy overhead he would catch sight of the giant specter. Larbalestrier only walked in the well-lit places at night, and used to find himself running across a dark street. When he looked in the glass, he saw the prisoner's reflection instead of his own.

When he went to bed he did not put out the light, for he had heard stealthy footsteps by the wall, he had felt the breath of an invisible creature on his face, and he had seen a network of monstrous pictures changing before his eyes. Catherine had put out the light one night, thinking he had forgotten it, but when he woke up, he was so frightened that he called her to light it at once. She obeyed, terrified at his anger and fear.

Involuntarily, he adopted the tones and accents of the prisoner. He was no longer tormented by the childish superstition of the number eight, but the whole atmosphere seemed to recall the other, so that he could never forget the prisoner. He used to see him in his cell, wretched, pitiful, with cropped head and the gray sackcloth of convicts, pathetic . . . but formidable.

One of the jurymen was charged with selling at short weight. It was one of the eight! The balance was leaning, it would never be true again. . . . His disease could no longer be denied, but his only source of hope was that he was conscious of his state. He knew that there was no real ground for this appar-

ently pitiless persecution. He could not make out how this prisoner could free himself to haunt him persistently, indefatigably. Science ridicules superstitions: there are no spirits, no phantoms to haunt us. The idea is absurd! It is a man himself, who, in his weakness, creates the monstrous creatures that torment us.

But what was he to do?

The usual medical remedies might be effective in ordinary cases, but they would be useless in a supersensitive nature like his. What remedies could relieve the suffering of the soul, wipe out all traces from the memory, and relieve the soul of its intolerable burden?

Gradually, signs of his sufferings began to be noticeable in his bearing and appearance. He looked wild-eyed. He was easily startled, and always looked about him distrustfully when he went out. His voice became painfully husky. His blood flowed quickly through his veins, and his breath came in short, feverish catches.

He longed for some event, even for some catastrophe that would deliver him from the toils that held him prisoner. But, outwardly, his life was even and calm, there was no shock to disturb him. He dared not confide in any of his colleagues, for he was ashamed of his weakness, and yet it was absolutely essential for him to be delivered from the frightful dreams and visions that tortured him.

He threw himself whole-heartedly into study, isolating himself in the dissecting room, and giving up his lectures and his patients, in spite of their protests and surprise.

He studied the corpses there, with the desperate concentration of a man who must escape from some fatal preoccupation, in the hope that work would save him once again from himself. In this way, days and weeks passed, when he almost knew peace. If he let himself relax, he fell again a prey to vague terrors, for the wound was still there, although he hoped and believed that it was healing. The dissecting room became a refuge where he pursued his mental cure. To the public he was a devoted martyr to science, for no one guessed that a nest of vipers were sucking at his life blood.

One morning, at breakfast, Catherine said:

"Do you know that HE is very ill, Monsieur Pierre?"

"Who?" he asked, in an absent-minded way.

"The man you condemned," she answered in a whisper, as though she knew she was giving grave news.

The wound was reopened again, it was aching, bleeding. He raised his hand to his head as though he had been struck.

"Who told you that?"

"I saw it in the paper."

He had given up reading newspapers.

Catherine was right; the prisoner was pining away. Most papers said that he was dying of remorse, but a few suggested tentatively that he might be giving the final and only possible proof of his innocence, bearing out his previous protestations.

He tried to resist the temptation of reading, but he could not. The ordeal was not so terrible as he feared, because in his selfish search for relief, he thought that the prisoner's death might be the end of his troubles.

He went into the dissecting room that day with a lighter heart. The emaciated form of a young consumptive was lying on the stretcher. He had a black mustache, and his lower lip, when contracted in his last agony, left one big tooth visible.

Larbalestrier was seeking a remedy for diseases of the lungs. He examined this man's with meticulous care in the dead silence that was rarely broken by the sound of a drop of blood falling onto the floor. The corpse was lying stiff, with the arms stretched out, as though it were straining itself in order not to shriek.

Suddenly, he heard a voice coming from the direction of the head. It was a low, low voice saying:

"It is I."

The juryman's blood stood still in his veins. Could this corpse speak? He bent down and forced himself to look at the face; he could feel the chill of death as he bent.

"Yes, it is I," said the same sepulchral voice.

Larbalestrier drew himself up with a sudden, swift movement.

Horrible vision. Instead of the face with a black mustache, there was the prisoner's face, ashen, livid. He staggered, dizzy, and sank down as though he were thunderstruck.

IV

When he came to himself, he was lying in his room, with a colleague beside him, saying:

"Now, there you are. Of course, you've been doing too much. You shouldn't kill yourself, for it's scarcely reasonable to kill yourself for the sake of others. No more dissecting room for you!"

Dissecting room? Ah, yes, he remembered. He would never, never have the courage to go back there. The very sound of the word made him shudder. So he would have to give up work, he would no longer have that defense against the bitter enemy. His firm will and clear mind gave place to weak vacillation. He became timid and wavering, the easy prey of failure and defeat. He longed for consolation and affection, but he had no one who could give them to him. The magnificent portrait of his mother, with her theatrical air and superb pose, brought him no comfort, so he said to the old servant:

"Catherine, come here."

And with his eyes closed, he moved his hand to touch hers. He was sobbing.

The servant watched him, full of compassion and interest. Ever since the night when he had come home from the trial, she had noticed how different he was, and it was above all his silence that frightened her. She soon fell into the habit of attending to him in silence and of walking softly, as though she were in the presence of a sick man. The house seemed like a tomb, peopled by phantoms. Every night she had a vague presentiment of fear when she was waiting for her master, and she bade him good-night with the poignant tenderness of one who dreads a coming separation.

He was sobbing; the man she had cared for ever since she received him one winter night from his father at the Gare du Nord. Her heart ached with compassion and sympathy, and the rare tears of the aged flowed down her cheeks. Pierre threw his arms round her as a son would, and they sobbed together, until she released herself gently, and said:

"Monsieur Pierre, you ought to marry."

That this childish commonplace should shatter his treasured

illusion that some one sympathized with him! He pitied his comforter, because her kindness was so narrow, because her comfort was so ineffective.

Dry-eyed, he turned his face to the wall, and his neck suddenly hurt him. He felt with his hand, wondering what could be the matter, for he had fallen on his face in the dissecting room.

"Catherine, what have I got there?"

"A sore, Monsieur Pierre . . . it's inflamed."

"How did that happen?"

"It seems," she answered, accustomed to such incidents in a doctor's life, "that it's the young man."

"What young man?"

"The one you were dissecting. His jaws were closed on your neck and your skin was broken."

It was a most fantastic refinement of cruelty that the big tooth should have been moved by a last contraction of the lip, that the phantom should have bitten him. He was a ready prey to superstition now, for the reasoning man of science was dead. Only a terror-stricken weak creature survived, with confused thoughts of reality and fancy, of dreams and folly.

He told himself that maybe it was wrong to deny the existence of spirits and ghosts, for had he not the evidence of his own senses to prove that they were real? Rational explanations are satisfying in their cold severity, but do we know all when we are limited by what our senses reveal to us normally? And what of the abnormal? And what of the gaps in our knowledge? Did Hamlet not say that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy? And Fichter believed that the visible Universe is only a garment hiding reality. Behind the externals of life, invisible life is swarming, increasing.

Thus the remnants of his learning assailed him, harassing his brain, and hours passed slowly, full of distress. He was better, but he was not cured, and he was deprived of one more resource, work. He meditated and brooded over his misery, fumbling, seeking for light, but the shadows thickened and enveloped him.

An idea struck him. If he could be positive, as he had been on the day of the trial, all his fears would be swept away, and

he would know peace again in his soul. Surely the prisoner's counsel would know, for they must have heard his last confession, or at least they would surely have guessed the truth. They had only argued absence of proof. They had made no definite declaration of guilt or innocence. If they declared him innocent, it would be the final irremediable blow, but he would risk it.

A few days later he went to one of the lawyers. It was October. Ten months had passed since the nightmare when his torture had first begun—ten months of agony during which his intellect had been undermined and the very life drained out of him. He went in the evening to see the old lawyer, who was remarkably gentle and fatherly in his office, although he was inflexible at the Bar. He was grave, too, with the wistful melancholy of one who has watched the spectacle of life too long.

He was working by the softened light on a shaded lamp, and papers and books were scattered on the desk around him.

Larbalestrier sat down. The barrister recognized him, and looked at him with an expression of mingled surprise, severity and sadness.

"Excuse me," he said, "but before discussing your business, weren't you one of the Jurymen last December?"

"Yes," answered Pierre, sadly.

He noticed a compassionate expression on the barrister's face, and he wondered whether it was because of the change wrought by illness in his appearance, or because of the eagerness he had shown then in the trial.

After a pause, Pierre said, almost inaudibly:

"That's just what I want to talk about. I must try to tell you. . . . It's very difficult for me. . . . I have been wondering whether I did right . . . and I can't rest. You can help me. I haven't forgotten your pleading . . . no proofs. I know that . . . no proofs . . . but a barrister can tell. I implore you to tell me whether you thought him guilty?"

He asked the boon in a thin, timid voice, pathetic and humble, like a poor man asking alms.

The barrister was astounded. What had brought the arrogant, convinced jurymen to this?

"Monsieur," he said unsteadily, "how can I answer you? The unhappy man you condemned is dying (as you are, too, he

thought), and even if he had made any statement, it would be against all professional honor to reveal to you. We are only concerned with proofs, and it is our tradition never to declare either guilt or innocence. We are sometimes mistaken."

Pierre interrupted, "I didn't ask you what the man said, I want to know what your conscience tells you. Do grant me this boon, Monsieur."

A strange light glistened in his fever-bright eyes. There was a breeze in the garden, and the branches outside tapped against the window panes. The barrister was touched to the heart.

"Monsieur," he said, "I pity you with all my heart. What you ask me is no little thing. The accused made no statement whatsoever to me, and I can add that I never once found one single clew—not so much as a word or a glance—that would betray anything to me during all the conversations I have had with him night and day. But I see that's not what you want. You want me to reveal the secret of my conscience."

Another breeze shook the trees, and the branches tapped again at the panes.

The barrister turned to the window, and Larbalestrier looked the same way. There he saw the accused with his face to the window; he was sinister and threatening. Silence.

The barrister gazed at him, terrified at the sight of this vision in some strange trance.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed, rising.

The other drew back, fascinated by the apparition. With wide-open eyes, he went towards the door and fumbled for the door knob. He opened the door, and fled with a strange mutter.

V

Once again the tormented man had a period of comparative peace, for his soul was weary. He was resigned. What was the use of resisting the inevitable?

He grew accustomed to a kind of double life; reality became confused with troubled dreams, and things of the material world mingled with phantoms and fancies. It was more fatal to give way to the spectres than to struggle. He became used to the idea of the condemned man being always with him like a shadow.

He cut a sad figure, with lack-luster eyes. He was at the foot of his bed in the mornings when he woke. He sat down beside him at table. He walked by his side when he went out. When he ventured to stretch out his hand, he found nothing he could feel, but as soon as he drew it back, the spectre returned. He grew indifferent as he watched these phenomena time after time.

This extraordinary state of intimacy gave rise to a desire to see the man whose phantom never left him, to know whether the spectre was really the man, and to look his tormentor in the face.

He sought permission to visit the condemned man, and gained it without much difficulty, in his quality as doctor. He went, or rather they went, his shadowy companion always following him. He was still with him when he reached the dismal, massive gates of the prison. After entering, he turned round; the other was no longer there.

The man at the gate looked at him in surprise, warders stared at him in astonishment, but he paid no attention, for he was totally indifferent to the outside world.

He did not realize that he had grown so like the convict in appearance. The dim visions he had seen were not all deceptive. Judge and prisoner were so much alike as to be almost merged in one personality. When the prisoner was brought in, the two were as like as brothers—two dying men.

He was three feet away, the man who had caused all his suffering and torment. His attitude showed that death would have been easier to him than life; his expression was resigned and impassive, as though he accepted his fate from some Destiny, whose will was more unfathomable than that of men. Pierre scrutinized him; he was taken aback by the mournful calm and the powerless indifference of the man.

"Have you anything to ask him?" said the Governor.

The convict raised his head, and his lips were half opened to answer this judge, who had shattered his chances of liberty.

"Have you anything to ask him?" repeated the Governor.

"No, nothing . . . nothing," he said, like a dog who knows he will be beaten and winces beforehand.

"No, nothing . . ." he went on, staring at the convict.

Then, suddenly, he turned to go away. No, nothing . . .

nothing. As soon as he crossed the threshold, the other reappeared. He was certain of it. All he could do now was to make his presence as bearable as possible.

Destiny willed otherwise. He died. Catherine told him the news one morning, and he looked for the shadow in its usual place. It was still there. But it was no longer a dim, shadowy form, seen through a mist. It was the man himself.

Larbalestrier sat up with a start, turning his worn face to the apparition. And he heard the words that had been addressed to him at Louvain. They seemed to come from the horizon, ironical, jeering:

"Have you anything to ask him?"

"What do you want?" he said. "Oh, answer me. Don't leave me in ignorance. Tell me why the grave moves away its stone to let you come back to me, bringing terror and anguish? Answer me, why? What is the purpose? What do you demand from me?"

The low voice—the voice that had spoken from the Beyond in the dissecting room—murmured:

"You must die . . . as I did."

Pierre swayed; the hair on his arms stood up on end.

"Say it again, again," he cried out.

"You must die . . . as I did," the spectre repeated.

Ah, surely this too was a vision, like the others. He tried to feel it, and found only space. Jumping from his bed, he went straight towards the phantom. The sepulchral creature was incarnate!

With his teeth chattering, he went back towards the bed, as cold as marble, and when he reached it, he sank down on it, uttering horrible shrieks.

He remained so for a long time, like a wounded animal in its lair.

Catherine went up to see why he had not come down. She found him curled up under the bed cover.

"No, no," he exclaimed, when she tried to uncover him. Then in an almost inaudible voice:

"Is he still there?"

"Who, Monsieur Pierre?"

"You know, the other."

She did not understand, and gazed about her in amazement, then she whispered:

"I don't see any one. . . . I don't see anything."

There was nothing, no one . . . for her. But for him? He raised himself, trembling, and looked up. It was true there was no one.

He fell back, exhausted, and lay inert, only demanding that he should not be left alone.

"You must die."

So this was the sentence of the spectre.

Die! When? It had not said.

An idea struck him like an arrow shot from the unknown.

"What's the date to-day, Catherine?"

"The twentieth of December, Monsieur Pierre."

The twentieth of December. It was on the twenty-first of December that the verdict had been given. He had been the prey of the furies for nearly a year. Was the anniversary to be the day appointed for his execution?

He thought of death. . . . SUICIDE? Should he escape from life into death?

No. Why should he obey these visions, these horrible voices? Would his terrors be less in the dark abyss? Had the end of his tortures come?

The thought of suicide was only a new snare set by the devil. Away with the poison, the gun, he would not succumb! He would begin the struggle over again, and if he withstood, he would, like Faust, be saved from Satan. He would be cured of human passions, and he would awaken, bruised but saved, on some green pastures in the land of peace. . . . What was that? A shot? From where? And why was the floor of the room pitching like a ship? Now he was accustomed to the terrible, surely nothing could stir him or rouse him.

He was on the watch for the rest of the day; the hours passed slowly and monotonously. At twilight the snow began to fall. He went to bed, half reassured. In his sleep his determination was relaxed, and sad, confused dreams filled his brain. He was

hovering in still and icy space amid the clouds, then amid a loathsome chaos filling limitless space. At one time he was in the light, at another, he was in darkness. And he felt himself becoming more and more absorbed in vast confusion of the universe. All was formless and dim around him, and the end was disintegration.

He slept heavily until eleven o'clock, for he did not want to wake on a day that could never end for him. He heard stealthy footsteps on the stairs when he woke, the door opened. It was the other.

"It is to-day."

"I know it, tyrant," answered Larbalestrier. The words of Macbeth rang in his ears.

". . . my firm nerves

Shall never tremble: or be alive again,

And dare me to the desert with thy sword; if trembling I inhibit thee, protest me. The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!"

And he added firmly:

"What do you want?"

"You to kill yourself," answered the spectre, and withdrew. Its stealthy step could be heard on the stairs.

Catherine came in; surely she had met it.

"Whom did you meet just now?"

"No one," she answered in surprise.

Pierre rose; he was conscious of the danger, but he was calm and resolute.

"You must kill yourself," the spirit had said. He would not kill himself.

Suicide! He knew it would be the end of hallucinations for him. But he would be subject to no more hallucinations. The ghost was not the figment of a harassed brain, it was a reality, it was tangible, made of flesh and blood. It would never be able to withstand an open struggle; he would challenge it. He dressed himself and wanted to go out into the country where he could breathe the open air and enjoy freedom and open spaces.

He glanced at the portrait of his mother. In the dull light, she looked sad and hazy. He watched her, until her lips seemed to part and form the word, "Good-by."

This was the effect of his distress. He must not yield to wild fancies, he must act. And yet, in spite of himself, he turned round as he was going out of the room, and said, "Good-by."

He went out into the country on a clear winter morning; he chose the west side of the valley of the Serme, where he had spent much of his childhood and youth.

There was a slight covering of snow on the fields, and the sickly sunlight seemed to be a last remnant of summer. All was still and isolated.

He walked along the roads he knew well, through familiar villages, across woods of giant trees, and across frozen streamlets. A host of protective phantoms gathered round him in this country that had been the garden of his youth; he wondered whether these were his last hopes or the last consolation granted to a dying man.

He walked on until evening, and then he did not stop, for he reveled in the bliss of activity; he saturated himself in the magic charm of the woods and roads and quiet villages that appealed to him more subtly by night than by day.

There was a full moon, and he heard a clock chiming ten as he went from Jette towards Laeken. He crossed the bridge over the canal; in the distance in front of him shone the bright lights of the station of Schaerbeek. He counted them, two, four, six, eight! He shuddered, and the horrible associations of this number came back to him.

He turned, and went down l'Allée Verte, with its fine lime trees white with hoar frost, walking quickly as though he would hasten the progress of time by so doing. In a few minutes the charm would be broken, for it was at eleven o'clock that the verdict had been delivered before.

Oh, the curse.

The old avenue was deserted and it seemed to sleep, long and straight, beside the sleeping river. Both were covered with a layer of snow. Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him. His heart beat fast . . . he turned round. There was some one quite near him.

It was the OTHER! !

They stared at one another, whiter than the snow at their feet. As at Louvain, the dead man and the living man were

like brothers. The rage of despair surged in Larbalestrier's soul.

The man who was no more raised his voice:

"You've not killed yourself?" he asked.

"No, no, no!" screamed the other.

"Then," said the phantom, rattling, "it's between us."

The combat was fierce, as though two wild animals were fighting.

The spectre seized the juryman by the throat with its two hands, and he thumped his enemy's head, in despair. He waved his arms in the air, like the wings of a windmill, and he felt his flesh bruised and torn by the blows that fell.

Larbalestrier yielded. In spite of all his efforts the phantom drove him nearer and nearer to the muddy canal. His terrible opponent was going to drown him. He tried to resist, but it was in vain. He was drawing nearer and nearer the edge of the water.

He felt the turf under his feet, although he had made superhuman efforts not to leave the road, but he realized that he was struggling against a far superior force, against a monster.

He fell: the ice cracked, but he clung to the grass on the edge. He could still save himself, for only his head was wet.

But with one bound, the spectre was on him, thrusting his face into the icy water.

He wanted to shriek. He struggled, but . . . he was dead. Terrifying mystery, he was alone.

Yes, for that tragic half hour, he had been alone in the eyes of the world, no one had walked with him. In the eyes of men, he had had no enemy to fight. When his arms beat the air, they were beating space. When his head was in the water, no hand was thrusting it down.

The sinister commandment was fulfilled.

"You must kill yourself!"

The vision ended in death.

THE DRAGON

By M. SADOVEANU

"FRIENDS," began Squire Tonita energetically, drawing himself up to his full height, "I swear before God, that Father Gherman's story made my hair stand on end, but what I am about to tell you is even more marvelous and terrible than that!"

"Let us hear the Squire's story," exclaimed Uncle Leonte Zodialar in his gruff voice. "Let us listen to the narrative of the worthy Squire. You can see we have before us what we require."

"I beg you, Squire Tonita, mark your words well. As long ago as the time of Ancuta we have had the habit of taking council here with the voyager from afar, tasting the good vintages, listening to the deeds of Antin. I have an idea, my gallant Squire Tonita, that one could not find another inn anywhere as suitable if one searched the length and breadth of the land, nor such cellars, nor such wine. Our sparkling wit, and our dark-eyed women cannot be found elsewhere. I hope to rest under their spell to the end of my days."

"You need not scowl so, Jupaneasa Ancuta.¹ I was in love with your mother, and I told her fortune, just as I tell yours. I told it correctly too, and I don't think you were discontented with what I told you either."

"But I was very well satisfied," replied the innkeeper's wife, laughingly.

"That I understand, because it could not be otherwise, Jupaneasa Ancuta, because I carry in my belt an ancient book in which nothing but truth is recorded. When you asked me I told you the truth, and I also told you that you had the gift of making old men feel young."

"That's quite true," confirmed farmer Draganesti; "but I could have told you all that without being a fortune teller."

¹ Jupaneasa is an obsolete term formerly signifying mistress of the house.

"Quite possible, Squire Tonita, but I must remind you of your story. As I have already said, stories of this sort can only be heard in an inn like this. I have just been listening to Father Gherman's story, and cannot think it possible, Squire Tonita, that you can tell anything more frightful. For the first time in my life I felt my heart flutter like a little bird's in the claws of a vulture."

The innkeeper turned his piercing eyes towards the old man and said in his sharp voice: "When did you see the dragon for the first time, Father Leonte!" . . .

"Yes," agreed the old man, "when did I see the dragon for the first time?"

Unanimously we all turned towards the fortune-teller—even the priest Gherman condescended to lift his head.

"What are you saying about the dragon?" asked Squire Tonita, excitedly, and he came and sat down in his place. "What about the dragon?" and he looked at us so amazed and astonished that one could see that he kept his place with difficulty.

"When I saw the dragon for the first time," said Father Leonte calmly, "I was like that boy there, having passed my twentieth year and my father was teaching me his calling, for he also was a fortune-teller and a sorcerer, the like of whom is not found to-day. During the daytime he taught me the herbs and the roots of the earth, and at night the stars of the heavens. It was then that I saw the dragon for the first time, on the Bolindari hills." The farmer Draganesti sighed deeply—and casting a solemn glance towards Father Leonte, he said, "Never have I seen such a monster," and his voice became weak and timid.

"Hurry up and tell us quickly, Father Leonte, for we are anxious to hear."

"I have not much to relate as far as stories are concerned," said the speaker apologetically, "except what I saw."

"With Squire Tonita's permission, I will relate it to you and afterwards I should like to listen to his story."

Father Leonte tightened his belt and smoothed his scarf and glanced around to make sure that the bottle of wine was within easy reach of his hand.

He was a peasant from our country, in Moldavia, clean shaven, with a white mustache, a round face, strong and rather stout.

When he talked and laughed he showed his teeth like pieces of chalk.

"As long as I have this mill," he said good humoredly, "I shall not die of hunger."

He began, as was his wont, to speak with energy. "How can I tell such a story in a hurry, my dear Squire?" he said. "There was at that time, living near us at Tujulati, a great proud 'Botar.' His name was Nastasa Bolomir. He was tall and austere and wore a long beard resembling a peacock's tail. He had been married twice, according to all conventions. The first time he married the daughter of a friar of Barlad, but she could not withstand his brutality for long, and she returned in tears to her parents. The second time he married the widow of a Greek of Negrupiente. She was a rich and beautiful woman, but not two years after the priest had joined them together, I saw her once in the Autumn, looking pale and yellow, as if she had been dipped in cream. She went away to consult foreign doctors and died abroad.

"Our Botar remained single for some time; the general opinion was that he had killed his wives. There were women of the village who spat after him as if he were the devil. My father used to say with a smile that Nastasa Bolomir would die a widower.

"However, after a little while a rumor circulated abroad that he was about to be married again.

"How could it be possible? No living woman could stand him! But do you know what we saw? He went to Jassy and was married by the Bishop to a child of seventeen and brought her back to Tujulati.

"She was so small, that as they got out at the house, the top of her head scarcely reached the end of his beard. She was fair and smiling, like a ray of sunshine. The old women of the house pitied her. She was such a pretty little thing, and he was sure to kill her, the wretch.

"Bolomir took her gently by the finger tips and led her like some precious treasure all over the carpeted marble floors. But scarcely had they got upstairs when she dismissed him with a motion of the head as if she were butting him with horns. She left him and went away alone.

"My father was looking on and was not at all pleased with the performance.

"We waited for some time but Coana Trinuta did not show herself again.

"Two red spots appeared on her cheeks and she was always laughing and showing her little pointed teeth; our big Botar became silent and grew thin.

"If Coana Trinuta had a desire to go to Rome or as far as Issy, she had but to beckon her finger and, hanging his head, he obliged her slightest wish.

"I do not know where the gossip came from, but the waiting-maid and the secretary's wife said that the Botar's wife was neither rich nor of good family. She was a sort of daughter of a niece of the Bishop's, so they said, winking their eyes knowingly with a smile as women always do, and I was such a stupid boy that I did not know what they meant by it.

"Once, during the summer, I was at St. Elie tending sheep. My father had come there, too. We lived in a little thatched cottage on the banks of the Moldiva not far from the pastures. From where we lived, we could see the river and also this inn. In the distance the mountains and forests stretched away as far as the eye could reach, until they were lost in the blue mist.

"I had no idea what was going on either in the village or at the Botar's house, because it did not interest me. But one day at mid-day as I was preparing the dinner, I saw the Botar Nastasa Bolomir riding along on his horse and he dismounted at our cottage door.

"'Good morning, boy,' he said. 'Are you not the son of Ilfrim, the fortune-teller?'

"'You are correct, sir, I am.'

"'Where is your father?'

"'My father is making hay on the hill not far from here. He will return for dinner.'

"'Go and call him at once. Tell him to come here immediately.'

"I hesitated, but the Botar gave me such a wicked look, and tightened his grip on the whip, that I ran off bare-headed. I met my father returning to his dinner.

"When he heard that the Botar wanted him, he said, 'Hum,' and shook his head thoughtfully, without, however, saying anything to me.

"The Botar was waiting for us at the cottage, standing beside his horse, leaning on the saddle, his head bowed in deep thought. I went off and hid in the bushes. My father went boldly up to him.

"'What brings you here, Ilfrim?' he said crossly. 'I looked for you in the village, and here I find you in the desert.'

"'I greet you humbly, honored Master,' replied my father. 'I am overseeing my affairs here. But if you had sent me a message I would have left everything and hastened at once to the castle.'

"'I know,' said the Botar, still cross, 'but I haven't the time to wait. Listen, Ilfrim, no one knows, not even you, perhaps, what bitterness weighs me down.'

"'Trials come from God, Master, but they pass away.'

"'You speak like an imbecile, because you know nothing about it.'

"'But I know well, Master, the pangs of love are the worst, but even those pass away also.'

"The Botar regarded him frowningly.

"'What do you know about it, Ilfrim?'

"'Your excellence,' replied my father, 'I know many things because nature has endowed me with this gift. I do not merely tell fortunes. I can also read the thoughts of a man.'

"'Then are you aware, Ilfrim, that a devil has come into my house, and I have no more tranquillity?'

"'I know it, Master.'

"'Do you know that she makes me suffer the tortures of the damned?'

"'It is just as you say, Master.'

"'Listen, my good man, I can get nothing either through kindness or threats, or by anything I can do. This morning the shameful news is brought to me by her maid that my wife goes to Rome for the purpose of meeting the oldest son of Vuza, and they are plotting together to try and get rid of me.

"'You may perhaps have seen Alixandrel Vuza. He came to my house twice this summer under the pretense of selling me white Russian horses. But he came for another reason and I

did not understand the situation. Now I have come to a decision as to what I must do, but I have also come to consult you that I may make no error. You have second sight and may know what to do about it.'

"The master was raging about in such a way as I have seen few people do in my lifetime. He gnawed at his beard and stamped about the place. My father hurried into the cottage and came back with this purse which you see suspended from my belt. Then taking out the book he sat down on a stool beside the fire, dampened his finger and began turning over the leaves. The Botar still stood beside his horse.

"'What was the month and the day of your birth, your Excellence?'

"'I was born on Friday, Ilfrim, the 18th of October.'

"'Then,' said my father thoughtfully, 'you belong to the sign of the Scorpion. Before us, Master, the truth is written, that your excellence is a man of irritable temperament. Such being the case you must not let yourself be carried away by it.'

"Continuing, my father read various other passages from the book—those regarding him directly, hoping thereby to calm him.

"But the Botar, tugging at his beard with great impatience, growled, 'Tell me, Ilfrim, what can you tell me about my married life?'

"My father studied the book attentively and replied: 'You married Coana Trinuta in the month of April, in the Holy Week after Easter. According to the symbols it is the happiest time to be wedded. Therefore all the signs are lucky for your wife. And farther along, Master, it is written, "The secret of his happiness is in the scales. The lies of others will cause him much unrest. . . ." Therefore, Master, if these words are recorded here, it seems to me that all they have told you are falsehoods, and it is better to cast aside evil thoughts.'

"The Botar reflected for a while.

"'I wonder if one can rely on your statements?'

"'It was as I have told you, Master.'

"'Well, then, tell me, Why did Coana Trinuta go to Rome? She went yesterday, saying she would return to-day.'

"'She went because it was the will of God, Master. May no misfortune arrive because of those lying statements.'

"‘It is possible,’ replied the Botar calmly, ‘what you say is true. Otherwise something dreadful might happen. . . . Yes, my good man, I have certainly listened to the truth from your book before. Then what am I to do?’

"‘It is better to wait. All will turn out for the best.’

"And so the Botar left our cottage and my father watched him with a twinkle in his eyes until he was out of sight. Then, leaving the pot upon the ashes, he told me to harness the horse and cart.

"We got in and sat down low in the grass in the bottom of the cart. We went down across the valley, forded the stream, and drove for all we were worth to the inn. Ancuta d’Antin was waiting on the threshold.

"My father, pulling the cart up near her, asked:

"‘My child, will you be so good as to tell me if Coana Trinuta has passed by on the road from Tujulati to Rome?’

"‘Yes, she did,’ she replied.

"‘She has not gone back yet, has she?’

"‘No, but perhaps she will pass this evening.’

"‘Good, goddaughter Ancuta, you have spoken something pleasing to God.’

"‘But what is the matter?’

"‘The matter is this: Some busy-body has opened the eyes of the Botar—and now he sees red and is bound to have his revenge.’

"‘How is it possible! Who could have done such a thing?’ cried Ancuta, wringing her hands. ‘Is he going to kill this woman too, after terrorizing two others and putting them under the sod? He’ll have the Devil to pay in the next world. It is better that one of our own takes vengeance in this world.’

"So speaking, my father and Ancuta consulted together how they could warn her of her danger.

"And now, my dear Squire and good friends, this is what actually did happen that very same day towards evening. The sun had been obscured since mid-day with heavy clouds of heat and mist. As evening was falling, we saw the four-in-hand of Madam approaching from the direction of Rome, enveloped in a cloud of dust. My father made frantic signs for them to stop.

"The Tigan pulled up. Then there appeared out of the dust

a young horseman riding a black stallion. My father recognized him at once by his handsome, fearless eyes.

"'Coana, Alixandrel, return! There is danger ahead! Proceed no further!'

"'What is the matter, old man?' called out Madam from the carriage. She was dressed all in white, under a little white parasol.

"Then simultaneously two things happened: the wind began to blow from the direction of the Moldiva river, and blew the dust in clouds over the fields, and I suddenly saw the Botar hurrying, with all his retainers, from the direction of the little forest, his beard parted in two. They were all yelling at the top of their voices.

"We were all thunderstruck, and stood stationary. Alixandrel steadied his horse, which was rearing on its hind legs, and tried to draw his revolver.

"Coana shrieked and hid beneath her parasol. The Botar rushed forward, followed by his retainers, and surrounded the carriage. He caught hold of my father and flung the son of Vuza upon the ground.

"'You scoundrel,' he yelled at my father. 'So much for your science and your witch-craft. Take him, bind him tight, and flog him with a slipper; but his skin and bones must remain intact for I will have him hanged. And you, you thief, you are the true son of Vornic Vuza. You call yourself a Botar, you! I will show you both how I will pay you out. . . . Come here,' he called to his servants. 'Tie them both to the cart. That's how I shall make them run to Jassy.'

"The lady flung out from her parasol, slim and alert, and furious, like a viper, and she shrieked out spitefully:

"'Do not approach, you hideous blasphemer!' She had thrown aside her parasol and her fingers became like claws as she threatened her husband. I really thought she had horns with which, as on a previous occasion, she wanted to butt him. At the same time Poslea cried out under the Tigan's knife:

"'Coana Nastasa, God will punish you for this.' As the old man cried out with the knife menacing him, there came a moment's silence. Then thunder and lightning burst forth from over the mountains. I saw, in an instant, the heavens become over-

cast by dark clouds, and the wind arose from the direction of the setting sun, and with one blast slammed every door in the inn.

"Over the Moldiva river, beyond the hills of Bolindari, clouds hung low over the water, the whole mountain seemed to palpitate. Then every one of those present saw sweeping from that direction, in great haste, the Dragon.

"I saw him too, as he came directly towards us, his long thin tail sweeping the ground and his body rising in the air. His mouth opened like a sieve in the clouds, belching forth heavy breaths. He swept up the hay in great gulps and blew the stacks over the roofs of the houses and tore up the trees by the roots.

"The Tigans, terrified at his strength and might, fell flat on the ground. Ancuta fled into a corner of the inn. I unbound my father and scarcely had time to hide myself beside him under the cart with the wheels broken, when the horses turned and ran away in the direction of Rome, dragging the son of Vornic with them.

"The Dragon pursued the Botar, caught him, and wiping his beard in the dust, flung him nearly dead over a precipice further on.

"The rain and hail ceased immediately and we could hear nothing but the bellowing of the beast as he went off towards the north like a great column, disappearing in a cloud of smoke. Little by little the air calmed down again.

"In consequence of his experience Bolomir soon succumbed. People whispered that it was my father who called forth the Dragon from his secret haunts. My father let them chatter,—but he knew better than any one who summoned the monster.

"It is a fact that no one ever spoke of this little fair devil any more, nor was she ever seen again."

SELMA KOLJAS

By L. SILLANPAA

SELMA KOLJAS was little understood by her associates, especially by young men in search of adventure. She created the impression of being an accomplished woman of the world, with her seductive, languishing eyes, of the sort which inspire poets to write sonnets.

People wondered why she had never married, nor had ever tempted the village gossips to chatter about her. She was most attractive in every way. She danced gracefully, and dressed in good taste. Added to these attributes the charm of her manner and the alluring expression of her limpid eyes won for her many hearts.

At a dance one evening which Selma attended a rather amusing incident happened. The young girls were chaperoned by their mother or by friends of their families. One of the chaperons, Madame Litukka, the wife of a rich merchant, was accompanied by her daughter Elma, and her prospective son-in-law, an impecunious student who lived from time to time in the family of the merchant, and in consequence was rather looked down upon by the community.

When Elma danced with her fiancé people began to whisper and knowing looks were exchanged with her mother. During the evening it became apparent that Elma was sitting in solitary grandeur and there was no sign of her fiancé about. After an embarrassing interval he suddenly reappeared, accompanied by Selma Koljas, and began dancing with her.

The merchant's wife, purple with indignation, rose and made her exit so hastily that she lost much of her finery en route to the door. Her daughter, Elma, knowing no more about love than her mother had told her, followed in her mother's wake with the meek simplicity of her eighteen years, listening to her mother's

indignant remarks regarding the embarrassment of the situation.

In the meantime a kind friend whispered to the student quietly that Madame Litukka was about to go home.

Vainly the unfortunate youth endeavored to explain the situation to her, but she would accept no apology.

Selma, on the other hand, never gave the affair a second thought; a moment afterwards she was dancing with Ilmari Salonen. Affairs of this sort worried her but little, and she danced calmly and happily until dawn, driving home, accompanied by her brother and younger sister, quite satisfied with the evening's pleasure.

The house of Koljas is very beautifully situated, and can be seen from many points of view from the surrounding countryside. Those who pass by know and admire its many points of attractiveness.

It forms, with its group of outbuildings, a most picturesque ensemble, especially after a summer rain. The glistening red roofs, in contrast with the white walls, stand out in strong relief against the wet foliage, with the blue sky above, and the disappearing rain clouds adding additional charm.

Once a student, not the one already mentioned, however, wandering aimlessly along on his bicycle, changed his course for the sake of coming nearer to the gates. He knew Selma Koljas and her younger sister, who still went to school, by sight, and as he peered through the gates of the fine old mansion he visualized them moving gently from room to room. He knew their brother Urho Koljas, a medical student, very slightly.

This particular day there seemed to be nobody about. Even the roses and vines, creeping up the balcony, looked unfriendly seen behind the railings.

As he gazed he could see, far away at the back of the house, clumps of giant elms stretching down to the borders of the lake. Plunged in daydreams he wandered into the grounds. It is just by such little incidents as these that a chain of events begins to develop, just as the cells expand in the flowers, filling the air with perfume and promise,—the clover ripening for the scythe in the fields, adds its own harbinger to nature's fulfillment.

In one of the upper windows Selma appeared for a moment, just long enough for the student to recognize her pretty brown

hair framing her silhouette against the light. She fastened back a blue-and-white curtain, which had been blowing in the breeze, pausing at the window to gaze thoughtfully on the peace and beauty spread beneath her.

It was just such an event which the student fondly hoped for when he paused before Koljas.

Two days had passed since Vieno Koljas' sixteenth birthday and the traces of the party in celebration of the event were still to be seen about the place.

Although everyday life had enveloped the house again Selma was still full of the impression that the festival had made upon her.

All the guests, including her brother, had gone, even the chef and his staff.

The kitchen had assumed its usual air, and the cook had resumed her daily routine again.

Vieno had betaken herself, as often for long hours at a time she was in the habit of doing, to hide away in an old doll's house, far away in the park.

Everything about the old house seemed to be sleeping on that warm July afternoon.

Time hung heavily, yet was passing silently by. Selma sat down upon the arm of a chair and thought: "Vieno is 16 years old now—quite a big girl, and I am 28. What does it all signify? That I have lived so many summers,—in two more I shall be 30. How happy I am. Would it be possible to grow old here—no. I don't believe it would," she said to herself.

Thoughts such as these filled her mind as she sat there musing by herself. Thoughts becoming more and more vague as if her mind were hiding things away in its recesses. She appreciated the happiness of her life. She had everything she wanted. She was pretty and popular—and yet there was some little thing missing . . . she knew not what.

Although Vieno's birthday had passed, the elder sister was still expectant. She was vaguely looking for something to happen, some event of an unusual sort.

As mistress of the house she should have been satisfied with the success of the party. On the contrary, the days following she wandered aimlessly from room to room, seemingly neglecting

all her household duties. She had the sensation of the party having been interrupted and something missing.

As Selma sat there she hummed an old waltz tune, one that had not been played at the party, however.

A dream took possession of her, seeming almost a reality in its vividness. She had the impression that it had transpired in the park towards midnight of a July evening.

Every event seemed real to her. The sensation held her as music holds one with its charms. Her mind became imbued with it—even the things of nature seemed to echo it.

July, with its abundance of natural gifts, is a beautiful month. This time of mid-summer is perhaps the richest of the year—rich in flowers and fruits and the ripening crops. The sun is at its warmest and the days at their longest. Yet it passes quickly just as our life slips by, the years roll away. Children grow into maturity as the crops ripen, each fulfilling its own destiny.

The spirit of this July day was nestling in Selma Koljas' heart with its limpid, tender perfection, and its mysterious promise.

She mused: "I shall never be stronger than I am to-day, but how can I too ripen into fulfillment. One day, alas, I shall die. . . ."

This thought of death drove all else from her mind for the moment. It was like the clouds obscuring the sun as it sinks in the west at evening-tide. All her happiness seemed to hang pendent, expectant, vaguely inquired.

This beautiful afternoon, harbinger of a lovely evening to follow, seemed to portend some rare event in store for Selma. She felt this instinctively.

Since the party something out of the ordinary had been maturing. Her habitually calm spirit had been disturbed by a sweet inquietude as if an event which was to influence her life was developing that could no longer be stayed. Something surely was about to occur. Some one, a young man, a dear friend, was coming to the house. "Can it be he, the one I have always wished and yearned for? Who can say, What joy, if my longings are about to be realized, my most secret hopes come true."

Upon this July day a stranger came to Koljas. There was nobody about. The vast entrance halls were deserted, no one greeted him, yet the welcoming spirit of the old house was

enough to satisfy him. He knew the house well and recalled happy memories of days gone by, within its walls.

He passed along, wandering from room to room until he reached the drawing room. He stood, and admired the view before him, listening to the tick of the clock, recalling the days of long ago. He touched the needlework on the table, and the music on the piano. Everything was quiet and the visitor felt his pulse beat in unison with this peaceful life. It was this precious needlework which said to him that she whom he sought was at home and that everything was just as he had pictured it.

He had not attended the recent party. The two days which had elapsed since the event had left little else save a sad memory.

Suddenly the door opened, and there the two stood face to face, the young man and the girl whom he longed for.

Love hung suspended for one short moment. They were alone together. Every one else was away in the fields, every one except this young girl.

Standing upon the threshold of the half-open door Selma still held Ilmari Salonen's hand, waiting unconsciously for him to kiss her. Slowly he gathered her in his arms and kissed her here in the quiet corner of the sweet old house. From that moment they belonged to one another. The happiness of Selma's life was truly blossoming as the flowers and crops of the summertime.

This moment was the realization of her dream.

Ilmari, too, was conscious of this fulfillment. His heart beat faster . . . for a moment he felt almost suffocated.

He let the girl's hand slip away and in a preoccupied way tried to go on by himself.

"Won't you sit down here," she asked him, "just for a moment?"

"No," he replied. "I should prefer to refresh myself."

"Then come with me to the guest room," and she led the way. The young man seemed to be entering upon a new life, and the present moment had brought him more than he had hoped for.

And love had full possession of Selma's heart. It pervaded her whole being. It seemed to expand as a flower in full bloom, the epitome of promise realized once only in a lifetime.

This was the supreme moment of Selma's life. As she attended to her daily duties and occupations she walked as in a dream.

Before Ilmari had stood before her on the threshold, she felt herself to be alone in the house, but in a pleasant sort of way under the protection of her father's roof. Now that she was no longer alone and some one else was with her she felt no uneasiness.

As she set the tea things on the table she experienced a new sensation. What was this feeling,—had the newcomer become less agreeable to her? Quite the contrary. Selma did not realize the change that had come over her. Her recent dreams were fading and merging into others as they trailed away into the past without ever being consummated. She liked Ilmari Salonen, but he still seemed a stranger to her. He soon came back into the room, and as they took their coffee in the drawing room together they chatted of many things best known to lovers, until Selma's father came in from the fields. Later on in the evening the conversation gradually developed into a dialogue between Monsieur Koljas and Ilmari, who told his hosts of his plans for the future and of his success, feeling that they were lending a sympathetic ear to his tale and shared his enthusiasm.

Selma heard much of what he said as she went about attending to her domestic duties. She realized with pleasure, that this man, become so dear to her a few short hours ago, was a man of affairs as well as a lover. . . .

As the days went by the twilight evenings in the old dining-room were passed in a simple manner. Soon after dinner the girls retired, and it was not long before the guest bade his host good night.

One evening Selma, leaving her door ajar, was looking out at the evening. As Ilmari passed the door, seeing it open, he looked in and quietly and cautiously advanced into the room.

"He is coming," she whispered to herself. "Now he will take me in his arms. What shall I do?" She knew the answer, and that she would let him. She knew he was the one man for her. She sensed something new and fragile being born within her heart that must not be crushed before it should be properly formed, something that would never be born anew.

Ilmari Salonen thought he understood women but this eve-

ning he realized he had much to learn concerning them. For long he had imagined Selma as his future companion. As he mounted the stairs this lovely evening he knew the sublime moment of his life had come. The air he breathed seemed to be permeated with the sense of it. He felt uplifted and exalted.

In this mood he took his love in his arms and kissed her, she yielding and smiling back at him. She returned his embraces, as he smilingly said, "For friendship and the spell this gorgeous evening is casting upon us."

Resting in his arms she murmured little snatches as she had done in the afternoon, sentences of no moment, the outpourings of a happy heart, enjoying the feast too long delayed.

The twilight, in its soft perfection, was as many another this old home had seen in past generations, succeeding one upon another. Generations that had been born, lived and died, leaving the invisible stamp of their dreams in these ancient walls, flitting in shadowy outlines across the faces of the windows, eddying with the swirls of leaves in the gardens and along the stately alleys stretching towards the horizon.

When Ilmari had left her, Selma sat long dreaming and reviewing the events of the last hours, so potent for her. She felt she had grown older in this short interval but as she fell asleep she was drowsily surprised how indifferent she felt about it.

A HANDFUL OF DOWN

By SIGFRIED SIWERTZ

THE Skalbottna and the Albottna are two pieces of land jutting out the furthest seawards, miles away from Church, law and shops. In reality, they form one island divided by a strip of sea tapering into a narrow channel, invaded by rushes and budged by a few flanks.

On either side of this bridge could be seen Nordin's and Oberg's huts.

The two old men were good neighbors, sometimes very good friends, especially on feast days when they had warmed the cockles of their hearts with a few bottles of wine kept by for such occasions. Sometimes they lent each other a helping hand or exchanged wares, for on Oberg's Albottna were to be found the most fertile fields and the greenest pastures, whereas the best fishing waters flowed past the shores of Nordin's Skalbottna.

One day in May the old folk met, but keeping to their respective banks, walked up and down the big stone flag that marked the boundaries of their "estates" talking to each other across the gully. The drought had lasted a long while and they were not in the best of humors. As they strolled along cursing the weather they simultaneously caught sight of a nest on the stone in the channel. It was an eider duck's nest, and, strange to say, there are very few laying eiders on those islands.

Nordin got there first; he was always the first, so there he was standing on a large stone, a fine picture with his beard glittering with fish scales and his tar-stained pants, screwing up his eyes peering at the eider. "Hum, the down will be fine," he muttered. "Louise has just mentioned the fact that my bolster needs re-filling."

Then Oberg arrived. He was of a heavier build than the other man and looked like a peasant.

"How can you know that the down is yours?" he asked.

The voices disturbed the bird which, lifting its head, looked anxiously from one to the other.

"Oh, even a child could see that the stone is on my side," retorted Nordin.

"Well, I can't, so there," was Oberg's peevish objection.

As luck would have it the stone was just in the middle of the gully, so from whatever side you looked at it, it seemed nearer to you than to the other man.

It is a recognized fact that people do great harm to themselves and others by stubbornly insisting that they are in the right.

"You blockhead," shouted Nordin, "can't you see the stone is mine?"

"No, I can't," growled back Oberg; "it's mine, so for once you can keep your hands off."

And that was the beginning of the feud. At the outset the two men were on the water's edge, but as they raised their voices, they stepped backwards, not wanting to frighten the bird, differing in that way from ordinary quarrelers who usually rush at each other with clenched fists. To make sure that their home-truths reached each other's ears they had to shout, and people who are used to a lonely life and to talking in a low tone excite and infuriate themselves with their own ravings.

In their frenzy they poured forth in a torrent of hot and angry words all the grievances of many years, which they had overlooked for friendship's sake: first it was the pair of oars Oberg had borrowed and brought back split, then Oberg retaliated with the story of a pitch fork that had needed a new handle after Nordin had used it, then it went on to the barrels of herrings that had only contained seventy small fishes, and the bowls of bluish milk obviously watered, and so forth till they were on the verge of calling each other robbers and smugglers, when the eider rose in fright, and wildly flapping its wings, flew down the fjord.

The two old men rushed forward and went on bellowing till a mutual vow to be eternal enemies and a mutual hope that after life would be enjoyed in the warmest place in hell brought the discussion to a close.

As there was nothing more to say they each stalked down the paths leading to their respective huts.

You see, it was only a silly quarrel that could, like many others before, have been appeased but for the venomous tongues of the serving women who, strange to say, had so far also been friends. They seemed to take a delight in taking sides and making things worse.

It is well known that old women thrive on gossip, so these two brought to light all that their masters had left unsaid. Louise, Nordin's half-witted servant, turned the dagger in the wound by repeating to him all Oberg and his servant were saying behind his back—one evening passing by Oberg's cabin, she had overheard Christine say that Nordin's fingers must be tarred as everything stuck to them.

The vile insinuation was unto Nordin's soul as acid biting into steel, making him writhe with impotent rage.

Christine, although bedridden for the last ten years, knew a good many strange things about Nordin, but if she often spoke of him, Oberg also got a share of her tongue—his greed was out of proportion with his intelligence was the verdict which went to show that all her sympathy was not for her master.

So the two old men got so enraged that a day came when, as if by mutual consent, they rushed, brandishing hatchets, towards the bridge and hacked it to bits. Oberg seized four planks, and Nordin seized four planks, for they had had an equal share in the building of it.

Thus all hope of the quarrelers' reconciliation was lost; Albottna and Skalbottna were once more two islands in the midst of heaving waters.

At first they took a delight in the novelty of being real enemies. Oberg went down to Lappen to milk his two cows, a duty hitherto performed by Louise for half a measure of wine per diem. He felt that Ussa and Sommarlôv really belonged to him, Lars Emmanuel Oberg, and were more his property than ever they had been, so there! . . .

When Nordin went fishing he put Louise at the oars. She certainly didn't row as well as a man, but on the other hand Nordin could grumble and scold to his heart's content. It was no longer necessary for him to hold his tongue.

They were having a glorious time, relying only on themselves, but the shoe was on the other foot when they had to grapple

alone with a hostile soil and a rebellious ocean. Then they ought to have relented and forgotten their quarrel.

Nordin and Oberg had put their shoulders to the same wheel; they had fought side by side against barren earth and treacherous sea, so now being at loggerheads each was alone before powerful enemies.

After the feast of St. John, Oberg, perched on the top of his wagonload of hay, drove triumphantly past poor Nordin, who with Louise was struggling to get his hay in with pitch forks; but when the time came to harrow the potatoes it was Nordin's turn to laugh as he watched Oberg doing the back-breaking work with a spade. Up to then he had always borrowed Nordin's horse and harrow. But if Oberg had the upper hand on land, Nordin was victor on the sea—not that Oberg didn't know or hadn't the freedom of the best fishing grounds, but he couldn't manage the nets and boat simultaneously. When the weather was rough Nordin would sail round and round, Oberg watching him drift with the current as he hauled up his nets, torn and empty save for seaweeds.

So one was beaten on land, the other on sea.

One day Nordin's cow became dry and he could not lead her to the bull as the ferry-boat belonged to Oberg, so he had to live on fish, and winter was looming ahead. Luckily Nordin still had his pig.

On the Albottna things were no better. Oberg soon left off fishing and he and his servant had to be content to live on bread and milk. It was heart-rending to enter Oberg's cabin and hear the old woman plead for fish, lying there with nothing else to do but think of the food she couldn't have and the foolish quarrel, the beginning of all the trouble. She concentrated all her hatred on Oberg, who was the only one to come near her bedside. Things came to such a pass that dire misery peered out of the black clouds of enmity.

In such a case, reason residing in men's stomachs should have been victorious and peace proclaimed, if an all-important and tragic thing hadn't happened.

Louise, the idiot, looked upon animals as human beings, and treated them as such, so she looked after the pig as she would a child. Fearing the beast might catch cold she never ventilated

the sty, where the poor animal was half suffocated by its own stench, and one morning it was found on its back, the four stiff legs pointing accusingly skywards.

The death of the pig would have caused great joy in the enemy's camp had they been aware of it, so Nordin and Louise repressed their feelings and hid the corpse.

Two days after that calamity Oberg's dog was found dead in a potato patch. It had been a good hunter although not a thoroughbred. Kula, as it was called, had always followed Oberg in his toils, and the man loved his dog more than anything else in the world, so he crept away and wept when he found the body.

Then hatred knew no bounds. Nordin was obliged to drag the bottom of the sea to recover his nets that had sunk because the cork floaters had been cut off.

Oberg had to doctor his cows when they came limping home each night bleeding from wounds obviously caused by sharp stones having been hurled at them with considerable force.

After hate came fear. The two men dared not lose sight, not even for a minute, of their respective belongings. They crept about silently, tortured by hunger and dread, so engrossed with each other that they neglected their front lines in their war against water and land.

One leaden December evening, Oberg sank his nets in the little bay. Life without fish had become intolerable. He did not leave the bay and he was armed as he was afraid Nordin would slip across and wreck his shed. Luckily he would be able to get near the cows which had become very savage since they had been stoned and hardly suffered their master to milk them.

Suddenly big clouds gathered and darkness fell earlier than Oberg, who trembled with fear lest his cabin should burst into flames, had anticipated.

In his excitement he let go of an oar, and leaning over to seize it, before the tide took it out of reach, he fell overboard. The feeble old man clinging to the bulwarks was borne away out to sea, a plaything of the currents and winds.

As Nordin entered his kitchen with an armful of firewood he heard cries for help. Throwing the wood on the hearth he proceeded to drown the cries in a great tumult; so one could have

seen Nordin stamping up and down the room rattling the kitchen utensils and moving the furniture. From time to time he stopped and listened. Louise would then burst out in a fit of hysterical laughter.

Nordin's thoughts went back to the time when he had fallen into the net, one moonlight night, and Oberg had saved him as he was struggling to free himself of its treacherous folds, back to the clear bright mornings when the ice glittered in the sun and the sky was blue as they sat before their bobbing corks waiting for the return of the eiders, the pure air vibrating with the noise of their shots as the big birds flew by.

Nordin took a step towards the door; Louise followed him with her eyes, her evil face distorted by a hideous grin, and hissed through her toothless gums: "Our pig is squealing. He is coming back, poor dear; we'll hear him again when we've no bacon this winter."

So Nordin slowly turned his back to the door and dragged his footsteps to the table and sank into a chair, stopping his ears with his hands to keep out the pitiful cries of a drowning man. Soon the voice was silent.

Nordin spent a sleepless night, quivering with fear or joy, he knew not which. At dawn he got up and went out. Oberg's boat was missing; there was no one about in his cabin.

Nordin suddenly felt very cold but very calm, of a calmness that precedes a storm. The sun climbed high into the sky, and still there was no sign of life on the other bank.

Oberg had got the only reward he merited.

Nordin then prowled round the cabin till he could distinctly hear a voice calling out, "Is that you, Oberg, you wretch? Where have you been all night?"

The eavesdropper fled, launched his boat and sailed forth. There was no sign of Oberg, of his boat, or his oars, only the cork floats of Oberg's nets bobbed up and down on the rippling water.

Nordin hauled up the nets, heavy with fish, but once ashore he didn't take the fish with him, but left the catch and the nets on the sands.

All that day Nordin and Louise were silent. They often cast hurried and anxious glances at the cabin opposite that seemed

dark, empty and lonely, as if all life was extinct within its walls.

At sunset, Nordin gathered up the dry nets and carried them to Oberg's shed.

He got up to listen several times during the night. The wind was blowing inland this time.

The following day snow fell heavily. Nordin went out all the same, his soul given up to anxiety; he knew that he ought to go to Christine, but it seemed to him that a wall had arisen between them making such a step impossible.

Hearing the cows plaintively lowing he called to Louise to bring a bucket and follow him. After milking the cows they went into Oberg's kitchen. Louise nearly bolted, but Nordin held her arm with an iron grip. The place was cold and dark, the bedroom door fast.

The intruders hung back an instant. Nordin was trying to think of something to say to the poor woman as he gave her the milk. He at last found courage to open the door. Man and woman fell back horrified by the sight of what they beheld.

The invalid had wriggled out of the bed, and had crawled to the window before which she had hoisted herself up with the help of a table. There she had died . . . the broken panes told their story: she had obviously broken the glass and shouted for help, but the window was at the back of the house, so the two neighbors hadn't heard the crash or her shrieks.

Having fainted she had either died of cold, or having awoken she had shouted till death had stilled her cries.

After carrying her to the bed and putting on her a clean night-dress, master and servant retired and slowly retraced their steps.

"It's your fault," said Nordin, throwing himself down on his bed. Louise shrugged her bony shoulders, her wicked eyes rolling in her evil face.

"Nobody could guess it was Oberg calling."

They didn't put out the light that night.

Another dawn came, a very late dawn creeping out of the wintry darkness, the sea crying out its hatred for men.

Nordin had never seen such bad weather. A terrific gale blew inland, but he wandered along the beach expecting to see a body cast up by the waves, and as he stopped to watch a shore plant sway in the wind he felt a great loneliness invade his soul.

A lost love wouldn't have left such a void within him as this lost hatred. Oh, how small and insignificant he felt; he dreaded the coming of darkness and shuddered as he saw the shadows gathering in the east and slowly moving forward. In the other cabin there was a body waiting to be buried. How could he go back? O Christ, what was he to do with the corpse? Soon it would decay, and he couldn't bury it so without any more ado; if he did it meant trouble with the police and without fail he'd be made responsible for the two deaths—two deaths looked bad.

And another night came and went. Nordin thought very hard that night and fell asleep at dawn. The following night found him busy in his workshop making the coffin. The gale howled and scuffed round the frail walls till it seemed as if the heavy seas themselves were besieging the man within. At dawn all was ready. Nordin woke Louise.

"Get up, woman. We are taking Christine to the parson."

Louise put the coffee to warm and meanwhile, shaking with fear, dressed herself in her rags.

They put the body in the coffin and carried it to the larger boat. Louise was rooted to the landing stage; wringing her hands, she gazed like some one fascinated at the singing waters.

"Well, fool, are you coming?" shouted Nordin, when he'd finished taking in two reefs.

"What of the cows, Master," wailed the woman.

"The cows have fodder for three days. I saw to that myself."

"The weather is too bad; it's like committing suicide, going out in this."

"We'll risk that. She must be buried in hallowed ground. I feel I shall go mad if I don't sail now."

"Oberg is calling to us yonder," she shuddered. "Oberg is calling."

"Quite possibly, but the die is cast—we've got to sail out."

"I daren't get in, Nordin. I'm afraid."

"Well, stay there, coward. The coffin will keep me company."

He then pushed off. Louise jumped in at the last moment, afraid to be alone on the Skalbottna, an ill-fated place. They sailed across the comparatively calm water of the bay without incident, but when they reached the joint of Frikloven, nothing

sheltered them from the heavy black and foaming seas rushing at them.

Nordin crouched, gripping the tiller, his eyes fixed on the waves; this was his element and he was past master in fighting a well-known enemy. In his struggle for life he forgot his worries, but Louise, moaning and wailing in the bottom of the boat, seemed madder than ever.

During the past months Nordin had been unable to mend the damaged rudder that now split in half before he could act. The boat turned to the wind. An immense column of water butted against her side, broke short and fell on her crushingly from on high with a dead burying weight.

The boat was full of salt foaming water long before she was steadied, and could no longer escape the infuriated waves. The shore seemed far away; the coffin floating in the bottom knocked against their knees. Louise, white as death, moaning pitifully, her back to the mast, was lost to the world.

Nordin then spoke his last words:

"If only Oberg had been with us he could have baled." A huge wave that had been running towards them for miles, topping high above, crushed them, thus avenging Oberg.

Christine was the only one to be buried in hallowed ground; she came ashore in her wooden coffin.

And that is what happens when island peasants cannot live in peace.

Struggling in an everlasting war against the sea and poverty, life's advance guard against cruel nature, they betray each other to the enemy and bring about their own downfall.

This story began with a handful of down and ended in death. Unbelievable you think. But can one expect such humble folk to be wiser than the mighty of this world?

ETERNA

By FRANK THIESS

At the moment when Professor Borylius entered the room, she was seated, quite nude, in a high armchair. She simply stared at him but gave no other sign of life.

Mrs. Sorny, the sculptress, stood unnoticed and smiling behind him. Not a word was spoken for several seconds. An utter silence reigned in the room through whose lofty window the August sun was shining.

Mrs. Sorny approached the chair in which she sat, adjusted the heavy black braids of her hair on her shoulders and placed her perfectly molded arm on that of the chair. Then she turned towards Doctor Borylius, who was still standing in the doorway, and said:

“Satisfied?”

Instead of replying, he walked up close to the figure, nodded, and finally asked the sculptress to make her stand up.

Mrs. Sorny complied. The creature stood up, like a sleeping beauty, smiling with glistening eyes and the incomparable form of a goddess of love. She was just a bit taller than the man and woman who contemplated her divine beauty.

Professor Borylius stroked his slightly grayish thick hair. It was perhaps a gesture of embarrassment because he did not appear to be able to speak.

Mrs. Sorny smiled subtly and then without saying a word began to caress the glistening hair and smooth the silken skin of the doll.

Professor Borylius took her hand and turned the palm up as if he were a palmist. Then dropping it, he said:

“I will christen her Eterna, because she is immortal and will outlive all of us.”

A few days later the arrival of a large packing case somewhat resembling a coffin in form was announced to Professor Borylius.

He jumped up from the desk at which he was writing to receive in person the case. Kamilla, his aged housekeeper, offered to open it but he sent her away saying that there was no hurry and that it could be unpacked later.

After Kamilla left the room the professor pretended to return to his work at the desk but he did not sit down. Instead he waited until Kamilla had returned to the kitchen and he could hear her moving about there. Then he went back to his study, closed the door and immediately began to take off the rather elaborate wrappings of the case.

When he had almost completed his task he suddenly stopped, shook his head, chuckled and walked back and forth. He felt as though he ought not to show any nervousness. The hasty manner in which he had proceeded thus far was perhaps noticeable. One must be cautious so as not to manifest any signs of nervousness.

"A life of solitude tempts one toward excesses. Hence be cautious, my friend, because you are no longer a boy, but a man of forty-five." After he had admonished himself thus he laid aside the wrappings of the doll without looking at it. But as he was lifting her he grew afraid of the faultless form whose beauty did not seem human but more like that of mythological personages, of sirens and of mermaids.

Eterna stared blankly. A somewhat cynical smile played upon the immaculate lips. Borylius was astonished at her lack of modesty and immobility. He bent forward and touched her breasts with his finger tips and then carried her to the bedroom and placed her on a couch.

The professor was not very prominent in the literary world. They said that he was unscientific, a dreamer, and lacked accuracy, and yet his books could not be ignored. The most recent one discussed the religious cults of the Egyptians and yielded valuable information regarding the science of magic. But it was said that he went too far when he maintained that the great magicians of those early days had the power to restore life to those who had died and also to kill those who were living through indirect means.

Everything that modern civilization had done the ancients had accomplished through magic.

It was assertions of this kind which brought Professor Borylius into discredit in the scientific world. This disturbed him but little because he preferred the solitude of his researches to association with his fellowmen.

His study was large and protected from the heat of the afternoon sun by green shutters. From afar came the shriek of a siren in some river boat. Borylius was so busy writing that he could not hear it. Towards evening he walked about in the garden. A fine mist spun a veil between the aster beds and the nut tree in front of his bedroom. He walked toward its open windows and listened.

"Why do I listen?" he said to himself whilst chuckling. "Is she not a lifeless doll?"

"Yet what does the word doll mean? What inactivity? A human being can well be so and yet be a creature capable of the deepest emotions. Kamilla, my housekeeper, might be compared to a machine which winds itself up automatically. Now the doll on the other hand will be influenced by me and thus unconsciously there will be created a union."

He turned towards the veranda but just as he was about to step upon the first stone of the steps he heard a scream, then some one crying. He ran up to his bedroom and found Kamilla bent over a mess of wrappings, moaning constantly and calling to God for an explanation.

Borylius called to her and with averted face she pointed towards the bedroom. For a moment he was also frightened although nothing had taken place which warranted it. The doll lay on the floor face downwards. One of her black braids had become detached. The rays of the setting sun were reflected from her superb back.

"That's a corpse," said Kamilla. "Your wife looked like that."

Borylius, quite angry, shook the maid and shouted, "She's only a doll." He approached the figure on the floor, turned her over, and raised the arm which moved in a lifeless manner in its joint. "Well, do you think that's a corpse?"

Kamilla did not answer. She began to pick up the wrappings silently without a glance towards the bedroom. After she had left Professor Borylius placed the doll back in the couch in such

a manner that she could not fall again. In doing so his hand touched her thighs and he quivered.

Mrs. Sorny had certainly created something uncanny. It was a glorious piece of work, a being of another world, a secret creation. The deception was complete.

He looked at her for a long time and then said to himself, "My theory is something new and one which the average person might call abnormal. But it is anything rather than pathological. It is really a lofty conception. It is the only faultless solution of equality in marriage. I will be the first man to achieve unchanging happiness with a woman." As night approached he stopped working and devoted himself to soliloquy. He loved these hours when, seated with half-closed eyes and listening to the running of the sand in the hourglass, which served as a timepiece, thought upon thought ran riot. It was true that to-day he was conscious of being somewhat nervous and did not have much trouble finding the cause.

"It may be that a human being is throughout life in a high tensioned atmosphere whose electricity is cut off only by death."

After dinner he retired to his bedroom, lit the lamps on the wall and the one suspended from the ceiling, and seating himself, inspected Eterna. He compared her with all of the women who had influenced his life and found her more beautiful than all, more mysterious.

Did Nature ever create such perfect forms? Yes, once in a while Nature endowed her creations with such beauty, but grudgingly, and only to make it disappear a few years later. This was more cruel than if she had never done so at all. Eterna would never change and even time could not rob her of her charms. Her lips separated slightly as if to smile upon Professor Borylius, revealing pearly white teeth behind the vermilion lips. Borylius nodded and said, "All you lack is a heart that beats."

He continued to sit and gaze admiringly upon Eterna. Suddenly arising he walked towards her and applied his ear to the cool, velvety skin of her breast. He sprang back as if bitten by a snake. He had certainly heard a distinct short double heart respiration. He stared at the nude doll whose dark eyes regarded him knowingly from beneath their silken eyelids.

"What nonsense, what nonsense," he stammered. "Have I be-

come insane?" He listened again to her heart and held his breath. He certainly heard beats. There could be no doubt about it. For the third time, "Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock." Beads of perspiration formed on his forehead.

Leaning against the wall of the room, he felt over his own heart the "tick tock, tick tock."

"Oh, you fool, you idiot. It was my own heart beat. It was my blood that was circulating," he exclaimed aloud.

He bent over the doll again. Of course, there wasn't any doubt, not a shadow of one. The tones arose from the blood vessel on the side of his own head. The artery pulsated, of course. It had a right to do.

Professor Borylius was not dissatisfied. A happy marriage! He chuckled and thought back to the stormy years before this period. A happy union whose chief advantage lay in the absence of unnecessary gossip, useless quarrels, of stupid misunderstandings.

She smiled! She remained silent in an almost sophisticated manner, looked at him at times in a remarkable way, so that he could not refrain from addressing her: "What do you want to say, Eterna?" or "Pray, do express what I am sure you wish to tell me." Meanwhile, Eterna was shrewd enough not to reply. It was just this silence which created a tense feeling that Borylius felt was increasing rather than the opposite. He formed at last the habit of talking to her, as if thinking aloud, every morning, while dressing. It was evident that these monologues did not interest her; a viewpoint which he ascribed to her solitary life.

These were happy days. He had cared but little for society and during the week just past, he refused to receive any one, no matter who. The silent loquaciousness, if it might be so termed, of Eterna was soothing to his nerves. Voices of his fellow human beings annoyed him. The red and yellow colors were already to be seen in the garden as autumn progressed. Just as soon as Kamilla left for the city to shop, he would carry the doll into the garden and place her against a birch tree or upon a bench.

The sun shone upon her nudity and around her there was a cooling atmosphere of heather. Once while Borylius was at work at his desk he visualized Eterna's face. He was struck by the fact that she always appeared to have her eyes open whether

lying down, awake or in any position. She always seemed to stare at the world in a sophisticated way.

"Perhaps her eyes could be closed." No sooner said, than he tried in vain to do so. "This is bothersome. This everlasting stare will depress me. I am going to ask Mrs. Sorny that she—" He tried again to pull the lids together but with the same result. During the evening meal Kamilla remained standing in the doorway and with downcast eyes said:

"Professor, I cannot bear to look at that awful doll. She seems to draw my very blood from my veins."

Borylius replied, "You are dreaming."

Kamilla appeared to wish to reply but only shook her head, looked at Borylius and walked away.

That night he slept restlessly. He seemed to hear some one rapping at the window, arose and thought he saw Eterna outside with her face pressed against the window pane, and her ivory-colored naked limbs spread out like those of a frog.

"Say, say!" Borylius cried out, shivering quite perceptibly. "Say, you, you!" He appeared terrorized.

Now he became conscious of her ability to open her mouth. She snapped and apparently tried to say something. He listened tensely because outside the wind howled, the curtains flapped to and fro, and the leaves of the trees rustled.

He did not understand anything of any significance, only a word which sounded like "Kakurgeo," without meaning and only repulsive. He awoke suddenly. The room was dark and the wind really blew loudly outside. "Kakurgeo," said Borylius terror-stricken. He turned towards Eterna and saw with palpitating heart that her mouth was open. He said disgustedly, "Mrs. Sorny could at least have told me how this doll's mouth could be opened. I must have touched some spot which caused Eterna's mouth to open. Now to close it again!"

He touched her fine head and laughed involuntarily when he reflected upon what impossible things one demands in the confusion of a dream. "I certainly had a stupid one and now I'll try to close her mouth myself. Her teeth are, it is true, very beautiful, but I am tired of such a plaything and I'll send her back to Mrs. Sorny again."

He tried in vain to close her mouth. In doing so he found

a slight elevation on the back of the head and, pressing it, saw that the mouth opened still farther and a small red tongue moved back and forth as if trying to speak. He felt himself imitating her efforts to articulate.

"Well, well," he said. "It is high time to have a good laugh when I see how she already has me in power." Then he suddenly became enraged and grasped her head between his hands as if to crush it. She closed her mouth. His anger gave way to laughter.

"What am I doing? How am I behaving? Like a hysterical woman! Well, she has closed her mouth again and the sweet smile has come back."

He kissed her passionately. It was the first kiss and there could be no doubt that Eterna had returned it.

That afternoon, instead of writing, he walked through the woods near by. He craved for solitude.

"And yet, why am I seeking to escape?" he asked himself in the course of his walk. "What am I seeking? Solitude? What does this mean? Do I see any one else all day long? Only a few words now and then with Eterna, that degenerate creation of a perverse sculptress. Do I think, perhaps, that association with Eterna is a true life in common? If such is the case, I can pronounce myself insane and call for a psychopathic specialist."

He strolled further into the woods.

"Just the same," he continued, "I have not lost my mind. I possess all of my mental acuteness and yet must say that Eterna is a being. She lives. I gave the order to put her together in order to avoid the disagreeable but inevitable consequences of marital life with all its worries, hatred and love. My usual mode of life is therefore not disturbed. Why not? Quite simple. She is not alive. Yet, she is not dead. She is not an inanimate thing like a plate or a shoe brush which are just as indispensable to family life.

"What is the most curious, however, is that this doll, without any soul, has a distinct influence on my life.

"She has acquired it subtly through her intolerable silence and her ravishing nudity. If I don't call a halt, it will soon be too late."

He hurried home and resolved to work for three hours with-

out stopping. But as he reached out his arm for the pen, a thought which seemed unfair occurred to him.

"Nudity is mystical, suggesting something demoniacal. Human beings have not clothed themselves in order to avoid the constant sex appeal, but so that the electric current of a mystic attraction of person to person can be cut off by means of isolation. Clothes serve as a means of isolation and hence to check the influence which Eterna has upon me she must be dressed in the future. It does not matter whether she is a human being, or not, when she is only an effigy.

Even pictures can influence us through their devilish imagination. Eterna is not less alive than any other woman.

He tried to place some of his late wife's clothes on Eterna but they slipped away from the smooth skin of the doll. He could not call Kamilla to help him so he kept on vainly in his effort. He soon decided, however, that the creature did not wish to be clothed any more than to close her eyes.

He put away the gown which he tried to place on the doll and after a deep sigh, went back to his study and looked out of the window.

"A beautiful garden, a wonderful autumn!" he exclaimed. "Let's get back to writing," he said, and sat down at his desk.

For the next few days, he avoided Eterna as much as possible. He experienced a certain degree of fatigue and listlessness but this he ascribed to a divine punishment for his excesses in considering the product of factory as a human being.

"One could only escape such a decree of Justice by emancipating one's self from the curse of such perversion. As for Eterna, she shall remain where she is—in the wardrobe of my third wife."

Meanwhile, Professor Borylius's new book had reached the crucial stage. He was absorbed entirely by idolatrous documents of ancient magics and their relations to cabalistic and ancient Egyptian mysticism. Whenever he chanced to encounter Eterna's face, so beautiful and fleshlike, he restrained his feelings.

One day, however, in the course of his studies, the apparently unsuccessful experiment of Albertus Magnus fascinated him. This great magician, after inflating a doll in order to give it life, found that at the very moment when success seemed at hand,

the doll broke into fragments. A speech, ascribed to Faust, but apparently one of Magnus's own, simply fascinated him. Magnus had proposed the hypothesis that man was unable to create fellow-beings because it was contrary to God's plan for the creation of the world. Man could, perhaps, through the art of magic, artificially create his equal in every respect except the soul. The latter would take flight to God. This much was true. Whosoever disturbs the peace of the world through creation of unrest would be the prey of the Devil.

Borylius looked up; the lamp radiated a yellowish circle of light out into the shadows of the room. Roundabout, there was only the silence of night.

He soliloquized, "I am not creating life. No, I am only influenced by a doll whose resemblance to a woman acts upon me as if she were one."

Quite weary, he supported his head with his hand and read again the words of the old Magician:

"These are illusions which have their origin in my extreme fatigue, like weeds in the wheat field of my purer thoughts."

His head rested more and more heavily upon the supporting hand.

"The soul with which God has endowed us returns to him. But what happens to the mortal remains? Does it disintegrate into its component parts and does thus the creation of man bear no other fruit than death? Or does this mortal portion perhaps, continue to live? If it did so would it be subject to the laws of the universe? It would be worth trying. I took unto myself a woman who is not a creation of God and if I continue to live with her—"

These thoughts spun themselves out into dancing circles of exotic colors.

He saw himself going back to the bedroom and seeing Eterna sitting at the table where he himself had sat a short time before. Her head, with the black braids, was resting upon her arms, sound asleep.

Tremblingly, he saw himself draw closer, touching her incomparably beautiful shoulder, and drawing his finger tips over her cheek and bending over to see if her eyes were closed. No, they were not and were looking sidewise at him. She only pre-

tended to be asleep and waited for some unknown act to awaken her.

At first, quite fearful, Borylius soon overcame this feeling and embraced her warmly, conscious of the impression that she reciprocated this token of affection.

As Borylius awoke from this dream, he hurriedly put the papers on his desk in order and prepared to retire. He went to the window, opened it and leaned out to see the stars and try to calm his agitation. But alas, the sky was overcast, the air sultry.

He went to his bedroom, and as had been his habit of late, took a lighted candle and looked into that dark wardrobe where he had placed Eterna days ago.

Opening the door just enough to allow the candle light to enter, he saw Eterna standing in a corner with head turned away from him, chin sunken, as if looking down.

The lines of her back glistened in the reddish candle light. The flame flickered. The enviable peacefulness of this creature could only be compared to the stillness of nature outside, in which the lull that always precedes a storm was to be felt.

He said to himself: "I am of sound mind. I know Eterna is a doll who has no real influence over me. Knowing this, nothing can happen. Here I am, and there she is, and I am living my life with her so that it can be controlled by me in every respect."

For a few days these thoughts quieted the nerves rendered so tense by his arduous studies. Whenever he retired and saw Eterna in the armchair and became conscious of indefinite anxiety and repulse towards something unknown, he would say aloud:

"Here am I and there is the doll. My good friend, don't make yourself ridiculous."

This helped a little but even when he kissed her, the thought would recur: "Look! Professor Borylius is kissing his doll!"

He asked himself the question whether he could be falling in love with her and answered by loud laughter.

He would exclaim, "Well! What am I afraid of? Reading that old magician's book has made me nervous. It's about time to free myself from such tomfoolery." And then, to show how

little the presence of the doll could influence him, he carried her into his study and placed her in an armchair, with her legs crossed. He would work for an hour or two with an occasional glance towards her and on one occasion he recalled his dream, reproducing as closely as possible her pose as he had seen it in his dream: the chair close to the desk, her arms upon its top, and head resting sidewise upon the outstretched arms. The lamp lighted dimly the arms and forehead; her back was in shadow.

He looked from behind and thought he saw his dead wife instead of Eterna. Surely it must be an hallucination, but, no, it was not. He drew closer to the face and saw her eyes, as they had appeared in his dream. He would not have been surprised at all if she had actually shown signs of life.

Suddenly the wild notion arose in his mind to try to repeat the experiment of Albertus Magnus.

He passed his hand lightly over her back. The ribs stood out faintly under the smooth skin. Her hair fell in two long braids across her shoulders.

"She has all the make-up of a woman,—of one who has lived once upon a time and celebrates her reincarnation in this creature. What is life, and what is death? Only heart beats and circulation of the blood? No, it is independent influence upon its environment, mystic action, irrespective of mere material changes in the human body. So Eterna must possess an existence separate from that of the dead being whose skeleton she happens to bear. If she is able to take part in my life, to undergo changes independent of my will, why should she some day not carry out automatic movements, so long as nothing offers resistance to her will?"

As night approached he observed that Eterna lifted the ring finger of her right hand and then laid it down.

"Why, that's sheer nonsense." He became enraged and pulled her from the chair and threw her upon the couch.

"You're only a doll and I can crush you."

But she only stared at him. Her vermilion lips, whose divine curves had always bewitched him, spoke something that he immediately understood. He gazed in wonder at her beautiful figure, embraced her, and felt the flesh becoming soft in his hands. She

seemed just like all the women he had ever loved and embraced before. . . .

About a week later he awoke from a disturbing dream. It seemed as if a mountain's weight were upon his chest and, with eyes half opened he looked around terror-stricken.

"Where is Eterna, has she left me?" No, she was there smiling at him. Mockingly? No, only with eyes full of kindness.

What an awful intoxicating dream. He had a hitherto unknown feeling of attachment for this perfect creature and a fervent wish that she might live. But did she live? Where were all the theories of life in spite of her inactivity of body? She did not seem to be alive enough. These perfect limbs should move, otherwise it was only a case of self-deception, degrading and undignified.

One day he saw to his ecstasy that she opened her eyes, and turned her head towards him after he had embraced her. When a kiss was implanted upon her lips he felt the heat of glowing coals but not a sign that she breathed.

The Professor became ill, not a real illness, but only very weak without much desire for food. Most of the time he kept his hand placed upon Eterna's. He felt that he must do this because the electric current could easily be broken.

At times he found that she could wink and move her tongue, without his touching the back of the head. Whenever he did this, however, she would soon slip back into her doll-like rigid attitude.

"More proof that she has left her mechanical, and entered the vital, stage. Everything inorganic can become organic when there is enough vitality put into it."

One day, in late September when he managed to drag himself into the house there appeared before him a vision of a doll whose waxen skin covered a skeleton-like framework, and who had artificial eyes.

She moved her limbs, bowed, stared, embraced and kissed him. He cried out saying that he must have been asleep. Kamilla walked to and fro in the garden showing evidence of anxiety and worry.

"Professor, you haven't eaten anything for two days. Let me call a doctor."

"Kamilla, if you do, I will run away not only from you but from the doctor. I am not sick."

Away! Away! No contact with the outside world! It would hinder his work. He had no time for his studies of the agnostics. What he was now trying to delve into was far more vital than the most brilliant philosophical analysis. It was no longer a theory but an actuality. If Eterna should come to life completely, should be his creation, he would be able to publish the results of his studies in an epoch-making communication.

He shivered! The sun radiated no warmth any more. He returned to his room where he saw her lying with half-closed eyes on the couch. He grasped her hand, and through intense concentration soon obtained a state of mental exhilaration. An occult power seemed to be transmitted to Eterna. She raised her lids and nodded. Soon after she sat up and touched her thighs with her left arm, making movements as if trying to arise. . . . And now the unexpected occurred. Eterna opened her mouth and mumbled a word.

"Say it again," gasped Borylius, and bent towards her, greatly agitated. He placed his ear over her mouth and listened, almost beside himself with expectation,—suddenly he shouted and fell back. She had bitten his ear with such force that blood was to be seen between her teeth. Borylius staggered to the wall. In the meantime she stared distractedly. He understood everything now. But it was too late. Her eyes shone brilliantly. Her lips, still red with his blood, promised untold joys. He turned towards her against his own will, midst hate and torture.

"Kakurgeo!" he whispered.

Some time later, on an Autumn day, Borylius lay exhausted in his armchair on the terrace. The dew of the October morning enveloped the leafless trees and hung like silk in the bright blue atmosphere. Eterna sat beside him but he was too weak to take her hand. He almost wept because he could not, because only when he touched her did she seem to possess signs of life. He almost collapsed when Eterna touched his knee and stood up for the first time. Borylius was wild with joy. She lived! Yes, she did! Child of his will power, indebted to him for all. She lived!

"Eterna!" he muttered.

He recognized her face bending over his, staring at him with anxious eyes, her cheeks as red as roses, her lips like a bud opening its petals, so firm and full of blood.

He became unconscious, yet between the moment he could still perceive and smile and that of death, he was able to see how she walked down towards the garden, beaming and immaculate, immortal and full of life. So enigmatical, while his own mortal existence ended as calmly as clouds disappear in the sky.

THE HORROR IN THE FOREST

By FRIEDBERT TUGLAS

LIEUTENANT LORENS mounted his horse and set off from the camp alone. As a rule he was always followed by a devoted Russian servant whose undying gratitude he had won by sparing his life after making him prisoner during a night attack. The man usually watched over his master and followed him about like a faithful dog; but this evening Lorens preferred to go without him; he wanted, above all things, to be alone and to give himself up to his own thoughts, for his mind was full of the woman he was going to see—she was young and desirable and his pulses throbbed.

It was a still windless evening, and in spite of a hard frost the air was very mild. In every direction the naked forests stretched like bands of iron across the country. Lorens had no wish to follow the beaten track, and he let his horse take his own line across the fields. In any case his goal was only a few kilometers distant and as he had made the journey several times before he had no fear of losing his way in the forest. He left the village at a gallop, but slowed his horse to a walk as they took their way across country where the animal's iron hoofs rang out sharply against the frozen earth. In the fading light of sunset an utter tranquillity reigned over the country where the forests, with their masses of bare spiky undergrowth, were gradually turning black as the last rays of the sun sparkled on the frozen meres fringed with trees and bushes. Here and there a sound echoed through the empty distance, but soon all was still and the rider was conscious only of the autumn night and the immense solitude of nature all around him.

He was no dreamer, but his surroundings began to have their effect on him. He let his reins fall slackly and thrusting his feet further into the stirrups he left it to his horse to choose the way, giving himself up to the rhythm of the movement, lost in delicious reverie.

He had a handsome ruthless face, marked by a saber cut on the temple. His well-shaped lips twisted now and again in a cynical smile and his gray eyes, usually so steady and purposeful, glittered with the passion that raced through him.

He had been looking forward to this ride and what lay beyond it for several days. The thought of it all made him tremble with the same excitement and anticipation that possessed him on the eve of battle, for he was both a soldier and a man of the world. Love and War were the two ruling passions of his life because they both made such great demands on his nervous force, and through them he delighted to prove his daring and his self-control. From his childhood it had been part of his training as a future soldier to watch the hangman at his gruesome work, after which on arriving home a plate of half-cooked meat, from which the red juice was oozing out, would be placed before him and he would be told to eat it without so much as a shudder. In this way he had won an iron mastery over himself amidst any scenes, however horrible. But he wanted to feel this same sense of self-mastery in the field of the emotions when challenged by that great power—Love. He knew its force. He thought of it as a conflict, a fierce but seductive struggle for which the few men who were really worthy should be rigorously trained. The professed Don Juans are all dilettanti, he thought. Their minds are filled with poetry and dreams, whereas love as a profession ought to be as fierce and pitiless as war. In love and war alike he neither asked nor gave any quarter, and he knew no limits except those imposed by his own self-respect.

Riding through the forest, where the trees rose like tall black specters on every side, he gave himself up to the violence of his feelings. Cynicism and passion were fighting within him. He wanted to shout and break the silence of nature all around him as an outlet for his emotion.

He imagined all that the evening held in store for him. . . . He saw a woman's beautiful shoulders gleaming like alabaster through her transparent draperies and her blue eyes lifted beseechingly to his. Love, prayer and entreaty showed there in rapid succession, but he remained unmoved. Suddenly he spurred his horse to a gallop, flying headlong through the forest where only the streams gleamed bright, till finally the trees and bushes

formed an impassable barrier in front of him. Gradually the country was rising, and the hills, covered with some sort of vegetation, were separated from one another by small valleys. Night had already fallen and the wall of darkness was so dense that it was difficult to recognize objects only a few paces distant. He was looking for the main road that ran through the forest, but he could not find it. He pulled up, and after looking all around, turned to the right. He followed this course for some time but without success, so eventually he turned again left-handed. The country was becoming stranger all the time; the land rose and fell in regular undulations like the waves of the sea, and by shutting his eyes and letting his body sway gently with his horse's movements Lorens could imagine himself in a boat rocked gently by the waves.

By and by he opened his eyes and noticed that the country had changed still further. The soil was absolutely black with hardly a blade of grass or a vestige of anything green showing and here and there stark branchless trees stood out like black sentinels. The horse's hoofs rang out on the hard ground raising a fine black dust. Suddenly he stumbled. Lorens reined up and looking round over this scene of savage desolation he was astonished to observe a light close by a distant mountain peak. This light appeared and disappeared in an extraordinary way; the earth seemed to be on fire; then, as he watched, the brilliance becoming clearer rose higher and disclosed itself as the moon, yellow and sinister. Pulling himself together, Lorens looked all round him. Where had he got to? Which ever way he looked nothing but the black branches of the bare trees met his gaze, and he realized that he was in a burnt forest. The dark ghostly trees swayed weirdly like skeletons in the moonlight and in some exposed places the wind had caught and bent them all in the same direction.

Lorens had lost all hope of recognizing the country. He had not even any idea which direction he had come from or where he was going. He could only see that he was climbing higher and higher and that the country was changing at every step. All this was most disquieting. He let the reins fall and left it to his horse's instincts to decide the way. The animal sensed his master's uncertainty and began to doubt himself. With difficulty

and against his inclination he climbed ridge after ridge, cautiously descending the slopes. They continued thus for some time, then Lorens looked at his watch, but in spite of the moonlight he could not decipher the hour as the air was filled with a very fine yellow dust. He lay on his back on his horse, steadying himself with his feet against its body. He was quite used to this fashion of riding which gave him the sensation of traveling on a camel. He gazed up at the branches of the trees as he passed, but very soon they disappeared and he saw only the sky, yellow in the strange moonlight. The moon itself was large and full, almost orange in color and surrounded by a very distinct misty halo. He stared, fascinated, at the heavenly body which seemed to be the only living thing in this land of the dead. Silence, like a cloak, enveloped everything; his horse's hoofs were the only sound, and he felt as though his heart had ceased to beat.

A feeling of drowsiness crept over him. He had played cards far into the small hours the last two nights, and now in this silent solitude weariness stalked him stealthily like an enemy. He got up suddenly, determined to overcome this deadly desire for sleep. Something must be done if he were not to ride in this aimless fashion all night. Just at that moment, gazing round, he noticed a light shining through the trees on the mountainside not far away. His horse seemed to have seen it too, for he quickened his pace. Before long Lorens was able to make out amongst the trees a small low house, in a window of which a light was burning, and he immediately turned his horse in its direction.

The house was surrounded by a broken-down fence which the rider skirted round in order to get to the front of the dwelling. The place had a desolate uncared-for aspect, and deep eaves overhung the walls making dense shadows. Only one window showed a light. Lorens stopped before it, hesitating. Should he shout or dismount from his horse? He was standing full in the moonlight, and the shadow of horse and rider fell immense and dark on the grass. He waited for he knew not what, surprised by the silence of the house, when, suddenly, he observed a little beyond his horse's head a figure standing motionless deep in the shadow of the eaves. Quite evidently he had been there for some time.

"Hello! Who is there?" he called in astonishment.

Several seconds elapsed before a voice, so low as to be almost inaudible, replied:

"The man who lives here, of course." The voice was old and kindly. "But from where do you come, stranger, if you will pardon my curiosity. From far?"

Lorens did not reply to this question; instead he enquired the distance to the place he had originally set out for.

"Oh, that is a long way off, sir, perhaps twenty kilometers," replied the voice from the darkness.

"Twenty kilometers!" ejaculated Lorens in astonishment.

"Oh, yes, maybe more, sir. No one ever goes there by night because there is no road and the forest is full of marshes. The weather looks very uncertain too."

All this was very surprising, and Lorens considered a while. For a long time he must have been proceeding in the wrong direction, and looking at his watch by the light from the window he discovered that he had been riding for more than three hours.

"Are there any other houses in the neighborhood?" he asked.

"No," replied the voice, "there is nothing but forest and marsh round here. It is five kilometers to the next village—and the weather looks threatening."

Lorens made an angry gesture. It was far too late now for him to join the fête, and it was just as impossible to return to camp.

"Well, the only thing to do is to stay then. I must sleep here." And without asking if they could put him up he got down from his horse. The man heard the clink of his spurs and said nothing. Lorens adjusted the straps attaching his sword.

"Have you a stable?" he asked.

"No," replied the old man, "but if you fasten your horse up here in the shelter of the roof he can eat and rest." So saying he took the horse by the bridle and led him under the deep overhanging roof. Lorens looked on whilst the old man secured his mount and then turned to follow him as he opened the door in to the house. "This way, please," he said, motioning to his guest to precede him.

The sudden flood of light dazzled Lorens as he stooped in order to pass through the low doorway into the room beyond where, to

his surprise, several men were seated. A lamp was burning on the table round which were grouped three men and a woman, who appeared to have just finished a meal. The old man, and Lorens observed now that he was quite aged, said a few words to them about the stranger's arrival. They all turned to look at him but without showing any surprise, just as though they had been expecting him, and then without uttering a word they rose and seated themselves on a bench by the window leaving the table free for the stranger who sat down and immediately demanded something to eat. Milk and bread were placed before him and he began to eat hungrily. For some minutes no one spoke; Lorens calmly continued his repast whilst the five inmates of the house, seated in a long line motionless against the wall, stared at him in silence. Then the old man asked a few questions by way of conversation, but Lorens had no desire to talk and replied only by monosyllables or not at all, and the conversation languished.

Having satisfied his appetite Lorens began to take stock of his surroundings. The room was large but low and the corners were lost in obscurity. His gaze passed to the little group of people. They held no interest for him, as he never took any account of those with whom he found nothing in common. But after his first glance he felt constrained to look again more searchingly. They impressed him disagreeably. The three men were about the same age and so much alike that one would have guessed at once they were brothers. Two of them had mustaches and the third a red beard and they were dressed in old ragged garments. As he observed them more closely he noticed an expression common to all their faces which gave them a still greater resemblance. The only name for it was cruelty—a cruelty so ferocious as to be inhuman. Impossible to say just how it showed itself but it seemed to pervade those still faces staring so fixedly at him. There was something canine about their heads with their flat crushed noses and narrow receding foreheads. Their mouths were tightly shut as though to guard the secret of the cruelty which betrayed itself in the small sharp eyes. They sat motionless, leaning on their huge coarse hands where the knotted blue veins stood out like whipcord. They were human creatures who had degenerated into savages through a

life of solitude and toil, and they filled Lorens with antipathy and disgust.

The old man was the liveliest of the party. He fidgeted about in his chair and kept asking questions without waiting for any answers. Lorens noticed a strange contrast in him. Although he spoke in a shy uncouth way his face was full of cunning and his eyes were sly and piercing. He hid some mystery within himself, of that Lorens was sure.

Filled with loathing of them all he turned to look at the woman. She sat with her head tilted back against the wall staring fixedly at the lieutenant; her big clumsy hands rested on her knees, and in the lamplight, which caught her chin most vividly, her face showed up strangely. It was a young face, unequally proportioned with prominent cheekbones, and the eyebrows made a heavy arch on the low forehead. But all that was most repellent in the woman's face expressed itself in the brutishness of the large red mouth whose thick lips, hanging half-open and protuberant, were eloquent of the cruelty which lurked in her brothers' eyes. From under drooping lids her eyes glittered humid and bestial as those of some fierce animal.

Lorens had lost his appetite, and, pushing his plate to one side, he rose.

"Can I sleep here?" he asked, addressing the old man. "In the morning I shall go on my way."

"Mirandola!" commanded the old man, glancing in the woman's direction.

She rose immediately and crossed the room. Lorens noticed her hair; it was heavy and stiff as a horse's tail. She opened a door in the corner of the room and disappeared. A moment later she returned and looked across at her father.

"This way, please," said the latter, rising and taking the lamp. Lorens followed him into the next room which was so small that he could almost touch all four walls at once by just stretching out his hands, and its smallness made the height seem all the greater by contrast. The lamp, burning on the solitary table, disclosed only the bed, bare cell-like walls and high up a window covered over with a piece of thick cloth. The old man, smiling sardonically, wished him good night.

Lorens was left alone. He was so tired that his first impulse

was to throw himself straightway on the bed, but something—a vague uneasiness—made him pause. He looked all round, examined the narrow, deep-set window and then turned his attention to the door which he discovered was without any means of fastening on the inside. He hesitated, then, shrugging his shoulders disdainfully, he began to undo his collar. Placing his revolver under the pillow he extinguished the lamp and without even taking off his sword flung himself fully dressed upon the bed.

He wanted to sleep, but as always happens thoughts came crowding into his mind. He went over all the adventures he had ever had either in reality or in imagination. His reverie took on a precise and definite form. It was a matter of the senses rather than the mind. He regretted all his lost opportunities, opportunities which would never come again. No one could tell how much timidity and hesitation had lost him, lost him something perhaps which he could never regain. He thought of all that might have been his that night. In imagination he saw the young exquisite girl slowly laying aside her garments till she stood before him in all the beauty of her nakedness. It was an act of violence that he had meditated against this tender girl who, perhaps at this moment, was lying asleep on the other side of the blackened forest sighing for him in her innocent girlish dreams. Lorens had a vision of her face—her eyes, her hair and lips. But suddenly she seemed to change. The delicate features of her face were transformed, becoming cruel and brutal, and two thick lips, red and terrifying, drew near. Lorens shuddered.

"Mirandola?" he stammered to himself. "Wasn't that the woman's name? Wasn't that what the old man called her? What a strange coincidence—the other girl and this . . . !"

For a long time he tossed from side to side tormented by these thoughts, but at last he fell into a restless sleep though he could not remember dreaming. His strong youthful body with all its racking passions lay quiet, hidden in the darkness. He did not know how long he had slept when he awoke suddenly and started up in bed.

From afar a strange sound made itself heard, a smothered cry, a sort of wailing. He listened for several seconds before he realized that it was a horse neighing shrilly in deadly fear—his own horse perhaps crying for help. Lorens rushed towards the door,

which was difficult to find in the darkness, and ran rapidly across the further room, falling against the benches on his way to open the door that led into the courtyard. Then he paused a moment to reflect, after which he moved stealthily to the end of the house. His horse was standing quietly, but in placing a hand on his flank Lorens noticed that he was trembling violently and drenched with sweat. Lorens quieted him, petting him like a child, all the while looking cautiously round. The moon had risen high, throwing the shadow of the house on to the grass. The silence was absolute and the air was even warmer than it had been earlier in the evening. The courtyard was dappled with the dark shadows of the surrounding trees which were linked up to a small wood on the hillside by an irregular line of bushes and undergrowth. As he gazed round Lorens suddenly noticed a strange shadow gliding over the pale grass. It was not a bird, there was no beating of the wings to be heard and he could not even distinguish their shape in the round mass which disappeared into the forest. At first Lorens had taken it for a phantom, then he realized that it had been the cause of his horse's terror. What did it all mean? Was he asleep and still dreaming? He kept his eyes fixed on the forest. All was still, there was no one in the vicinity of the house except himself and his horse, so after calming the animal he proceeded cautiously towards the bushes. There he found a ditch running alongside them into which he crawled, hiding himself in the shade of the bushes as he crept towards the forest.

He had hardly traversed half the distance when he heard strange voices in the wood. They belonged to neither men nor beasts, though the sounds somewhat resembled guttural human speech, and appeared to come not from the earth but from above. Lorens trembled involuntarily and continued his way more cautiously than ever, immersed in water up to his knees or moving on all fours. An indescribable agitation shook him. On gaining the trees he directed his gaze upwards and just at this moment perceived a large black shape approaching which, after flying slowly round the tree, settled on one of its branches. Lorens saw now that it had a human head and that there were already four other similar creatures perched in the upper branches of the tree. They looked like five giant cocoanuts hanging on a

withered palm. He felt his hair rising. Before he had regained control of himself the newcomer began to speak.

"I have been flying round making a tour of the forests but I saw nothing. The moon was shining and all was still, oh, so still."

Another head replied, and Lorens recognized the voice of the old man. "Take care. They are evilly inclined and pitiless and terrible. Beware!"

The other head croaked, "He is rich, he has much money and a fine horse. I want to wear his clothes and ride his horse. Oh, oh, I want his money!"

The third cried, "He must be killed. Killed without hesitation like a dog—the dog will only get what he deserves."

The fourth head replied, "No, we must take him alive. I want to put him in a cage with all his fine clothes. We must make him fat as a pig before killing him." And the head laughed harshly and brutally, whilst the branch creaked sharply.

"Gently, gently," croaked the old man hoarsely. "He's a fine bird. Did you notice how proud he was? Pride is the sign of noble birth. Either living or dead he is worth a lot. Gold will not pay for him. Beware, beware!"

Lorens hid himself, crouching in the bushes. His mind was a blank, but he was ready to defend himself. He felt for his revolver, but he had left it forgotten under his pillow and had only his sword. Again he heard one of them speaking:

"Did you notice how fine his clothes were? Whilst he dresses in velvet and silk we go in rags suffering from the cold. Did you see his rings? I assure you I have never seen such rings even in my dreams. Oh, when shall I be able to tear them from the fingers of the dead? The time has come! We are to be the masters now! Ho, hoo, hoo!"

"He is in prime condition, he has had plenty to eat," replied the other head. "His cheeks are ruddy and his hands are white. He slept in soft beds when we were slaves. He has eaten when we went hungry. But our time has come. We will avenge ourselves, we will tear him to pieces with our teeth as though he were an eel." A branch cracked in the tree, a long black tress of hair fluttered down and the passionate voice of Mirandola was heard.

"Have you noticed his eyes? I'd like to scratch them out

with my nails! His mouth is red like a flower—ah, I want to crush his lips and break them with my teeth. Oh, I know him for what he is—a deceiver and betrayer of women. He does violence to the innocent and brings shame upon the honest whilst he himself goes scatheless and without reproach. Now is the time to avenge all the women he has betrayed, all the men he has caused to be hanged and drowned. Give him to me! Give him to me! I want to repay him and his parents for all the tears which they have caused to flow and all the pain they have inflicted. Give him to me! Give him to me!”

And all the group cried, “Vengeance, vengeance!”

“Softly, softly,” exhorted the old man. “He is still alive and he has ears; they are good ears too. We ought to go now and see what he is doing.”

One of the creatures rose in the air, circled round the tree and flew off towards the house, slowly flapping its ears in uncanny fashion. In a few minutes it returned, crying from the distance:

“He is no longer there!”

Shaking with rage and dismay, the others shrieked:

“He is no longer there?”

“He is no longer there. His horse is eating under the roof but he himself is no longer there. I went into his room, the bed was empty and his sword had gone. He has fled away leaving not a trace.”

“I told you so,” croaked one of the heads. “You have let him escape. We ought to have killed him at once. Now he has escaped . . . escaped. . . .”

Suddenly the woman’s voice shrieked, “Look, there he is in the undergrowth. Look! Look! The fine gentleman is wallowing in the water.”

They all directed their gaze towards Lorens and immediately threw themselves upon him panting, shrieking and grinding their teeth. Their eyes glittered and their mouths opened disclosing large teeth and horrible red tongues. All the branches creaked and groaned as Lorens rose, transfixed with horror, and seized his sword. He rained blows on every side into the mass of heads and hair and hideous open jaws that surrounded him. The heads jumped about like india-rubber balls; each blow seemed only to enrage them more and give them greater strength,

till at length Loren's saber became entangled in the woman's hair. The open mouths gave vent to a hideous yell of triumph and hurled themselves upon him. With all his might Lorens wrenched free his sword, cutting off hair and scalp together in so doing. Shrieking horribly the wounded creature fell into the bushes. Lorens had recovered his strength now. He defended himself fiercely to right and left, and, turning on his heel, retired inch by inch until he was standing with his back against the tree. He cut savagely at one of the gaping mouths and the head fell like a stone. The others all threw themselves upon him until they too fell wounded to the ground where they rolled about like balls biting the frozen earth. Lorens had cut off an ear from one of the heads, and as the wounded thing fell amongst the bushes its other ear beat the ground like a fish's fin. Blood was everywhere.

At length all was still and Lorens stopped to wipe the sweat from his brow. Suddenly, without any warning, he received a blow on his side which almost knocked him over. He looked to the left whence it came and saw a wounded creature that had sprung from the ground and was clinging by its teeth to his sleeve. He stretched out his hand in an attempt to catch hold of the head, but it was impossible. He shook his arm, rubbing it against the trees and rough ground, but all in vain, he could not move the thing which held on like a vice. Lorens recognized it as the woman's head. She was indescribably horrible with her black mane of hair streaming over the ground all clotted with blood, and although she was dead she looked like hate incarnate.

Lorens ran towards the house. The head was heavy and the long hair fell in front of his feet, but he did not slacken his pace. Unfastening his horse he led him to the front of the house where the excited creature plunged and reared neighing loudly, but Lorens, hatless and still holding his sword in his hand, mounted and fled from the hateful place.

He could never recall his return. All he remembered was the darkness, but whether this strange obscurity was due to the forest or to the horror or madness that possessed him he never knew. He did not seek the road but galloped headlong without any sense of direction passing marshes and burnt forest, streams

and trees in rapid succession, but he could not flee the sinister darkness which surrounded him. The rider looked ghastly, his face drawn by fear, his hair standing up stiffly, drenched in blood, and the hideous dead head gripping his sleeve. It was not a man who rode through the forest, it was a spectral horseman.

It was twilight when Lorens came to himself and mist lay everywhere. He discovered he was on the outskirts of a forest before which stretched a field and through the trees he recognized some houses—it was the village where their army was encamped. Looking round he suddenly heard a voice hailing him from behind, and through the bushes he saw his slave riding towards him, his horse covered with sweat. From a distance the slave cried in his mournful voice:

“Sir, I have been very anxious about you all night! I don’t know why, but something seemed to say to me: ‘Get up, your master is in danger.’ So I saddled my horse and set out. . . . I have been riding all night without finding you till. . . .”

He ceased speaking and suddenly his mouth fell open.

“What are you staring at?” said Lorens, speaking like one in a trance.

“Your hair is . . . gray!” stammered the Russian.

“Gray?” muttered Lorens, passing his hand through his hair. The movement lifted the dead head, which till then had been behind him, with its black hair falling like a fringe over his arm. A horrible fear overspread the Russian’s face and he fled back to the village shouting in terrified panic.

Lorens rode his horse slowly towards the village. Every one turned pale and fled at sight of him, but he himself was unconscious of it all, and, leaving his weary foam-flecked horse to the care of his still trembling slave, he entered his room.

He divested himself of his clothes and then taking his sword he cut away the head from the sleeve of his tunic and placed it on the table. All his movements were slow and automatic. He dropped into a chair and sat staring at the awful head. Wounds showed on the livid cheeks, the wide-open eyes were filled with hate and the lips looked as though parted in a curse. Like the Medusa’s head a look from it had power to freeze the blood in a man’s veins, and this look struck deep into the life of Lorens.

He sat thinking slowly and heavily: "Life is a dream, a terrible dream. Although I am alive I do not understand life. This dead head hides in itself something mysterious—I know not what and it will tell me nothing. Have I been asleep all my life or am I sleeping now? Life has two faces; one I knew before, and for it *I* held terror, but now I know the other and *it* is full of terror for *me*. I don't want to see either one or the other. . . . I don't want to see myself or anything any more in the world!"

THE BRACELET

By GREGORY XENOPOULO

It was a fine, insignificant little bracelet in the form of a serpent, and it was deep azure in color, quite a slight thing.

The first time I saw it on my fiancée's arm, "What a paltry bracelet she's wearing!" I said to myself. "I must buy her another." And the first time I had the chance—Sainte Marie's Eve—I bought her a pretty little bracelet of gold and coral; it too was in the form of a snake, for I may as well admit that I think a serpent is the most fitting symbol for woman since the story of Eve.

She was most delighted with it, and she blushed as red as the coral of her bracelet when she lowered her eyes, fixing them on the casket, and her blue eyes sparkled under her long dark lashes.

She took it, and kissed me, and I expected that I should see it on her arm the next day, but, no, nothing of the sort. She went on wearing her glass bracelet, and I thought it wise to pass no remarks about it. I knew intuitively that this was more than a mere coincidence or a pardonable omission, and after two or three days, I could contain myself no longer, so I said quite unaffectedly, "Mary, I gave you a bracelet. Why don't you wear it?"

She looked at me in astonishment, as though she did not understand what I was saying to her.

"Why do you persist in wearing that poor-looking thing?" I asked.

She glanced at it, but said nothing. Then she looked hard at me; I wondered what color her eyes were at that moment, but I could not decide. I could only say they were not blue.

"Don't you like it?" I asked. "Don't you think it's worth wearing?"

"I really will wear it from to-morrow," she answered. "I

wanted to wear this one always, but since you don't like it . . .” She paused, and looked again at her glass bracelet.

“Very well,” she went on, “from to-morrow I'll wear the one you gave me.” She seemed wistful, and her voice was sad. The decision she had taken was like a sacrifice to my love. I bent down to kiss the curly hair that shaded her calm brow. . . .

The next day Mary was not wearing the bracelet. This time I lost no time in questioning her.

“And what about the bracelet?”

“Ah, yes, you are right,” she answered. “I'd forgotten, but I'll go and get it now if you like . . . or, no, I'll be wasting time in looking for it now. I'll put it on to-morrow.”

I believed her and said no more about it, but the next day it was just the same. I was grieved, but I was afraid of being harsh, so I said nothing. The more I saw the paltry glass bracelet the more angry I became. It was a lover's anger, the most easily kindled of all, and I made an effort not to show my distress or to speak of it. Several days passed and Mary did not seem to give a thought to the bracelet. And I, on my side, pretended to take no notice of hers. From that time on there was no shadow between us; our love was unclouded.

Some time after I was on the point of going for a little journey to Syra; I was to be away about a week and on the eve of my departure, when I was kissing her, I said to Mary:

“I should like to see you wearing my bracelet when I come back.”

“Very well.”

“On your word of honor?”

“Yes.”

“For the sake of our love?”

“For the sake of our love.”

She swore it with such conviction that, before going away, I came to a decision: if Mary would not wear my bracelet when I came back I should break off our engagement. The day before I was to return I wired to let her know, on purpose. The next morning I was with her. She came to meet me with the greatest joy and stretched out her two hands to me. Alas! she wore my bracelet on one arm, but her old one was still on the other.

What was I to say to her? What was I to do? And the way she looked at me! As much as to say:

"You see, I've kept my word, come and kiss me, and don't be ungrateful."

I kissed her several times.

"Yes, but that's not what we agreed," I ventured to say between two kisses.

"What?"

"I told you to take this bracelet off, and put mine on, not to wear the two!"

"No, but . . . no," she exclaimed. "Before Heaven, you told me to wear yours, but you didn't tell me not to wear this one."

"Very well, very well," I said, "but suppose I tell you now?"

"Hum! If you were to tell me now!" . . . and she lowered her voice.

"Do you want me to tell you?"

She put her lips to my ear.

"I won't give you the pleasure."

I started back, as though the glass snake had bitten me.

"Why?" I asked. "Surely it isn't much to ask you not to wear a bracelet I don't like . . . even if it were a diamond."

"Come now, be quiet," she said. "I'll give in since you're so keen. From to-morrow I'll wear only yours."

In my deep gratitude for her sacrifice I made a horrible blunder then.

"Who gave you the bracelet that you think so much of it?"

She did not flush nor grow pale, but stammered a little, as she answered:

"I don't know . . . I don't remember. Father gave it to me for a present . . . a long time ago."

The second blunder I committed was worse than the first. I went to look for her father and I said to him:

"That's a pretty little blue bracelet of Mary's. You gave it to her, didn't you?"

Her father put on his glasses and looked at the bracelet as though he had never seen it before.

"No," he said, and then after a pause, "no, I didn't give it to her."

From that moment I was consumed with jealousy as though the poison of the serpent had entered my veins.

I would admit no half measures: either Mary left off wearing the bracelet or I left her; I would die, commit suicide, anything rather than this. I was seized with uncontrollable fury. Some men hold the latent possibilities of exceeding even Othello, and my mad jealousy of my fiancée was more terrible than that of Othello.

My third blunder was that I said to Mary:

"You must give up that bracelet. I've found out something about it. I never want to see it on your arm again. I am warning you. If you persist I'll do something desperate."

I waited for her to ask what I had found out. She was silent, as though my tone had frightened her. She looked at me strangely, but said nothing, her eyes as blue as the skies in summer. They appeased me a little.

Eleven days! I counted them, one by one, those days of my Martyrdom. For eleven days she played with me, promising always that she was going to give up wearing the bracelet. Where did she find all these lies and ruses? One thing to-day, another to-morrow. Sometimes she was angry, sometimes playful, sometimes silent . . . and still the wretched bracelet encircled her slender white arm. And when she crossed her arms and the two serpents met I could have believed that they came to life, fierce, jealous, and spiteful, as though they were ready to devour one another. Oh, yes. One of them must, must disappear. I said so, time after time, for my idea was always the same, even if my words were different.

"I insist. Do you understand? . . . From to-morrow you're only to wear one bracelet. After that, I shall make my choice."

This time she listened to me, and wore only one bracelet, but it was not mine! I was furious. I exclaimed, foaming with rage, and banging the table with my fist. I don't remember now what I said.

Mary kept quite calm. When I paused, she said, gravely and firmly, without wasting words, just as a man would speak: "Listen. You are asking something impossible. I can't ever take that bracelet from my arm. I can oblige you by not wearing yours at the same time, but I shall never take this bracelet from

my arm; I must wear it until I die. Don't ask any more, for I can't tell you. I can just tell you that if you won't agree, well . . . you'll have to take back your ring. That would grieve me, because I love you, and I want to live with you, but rather than give up my bracelet, I would live alone. I felt that I ought to give you this explanation; now you can do as you like."

Need I say that I loved her? Oh, yes, I loved her! Otherwise, I should not have listened to all that without protesting; I should not have found a certain fascination in this mystery, which I swore I would always respect. How could I take back my ring and my word? Yet how could I stay with her? I loved her very dearly. . . .

Up to the day of our marriage, and for a long time after, we did not mention the bracelet. I decided to keep quiet about it, and I even got used to the wretched bracelet. I cannot truly say that my jealousy was entirely stifled by my great love, but at the bottom of my heart I still cherished hopes—perhaps the boldest hopes that ever dwelt in a lover's heart.

I hoped that, some day, I might win Mary by the force of my love and make her confess the story of her bracelet of her own free will so that she would leave it off for ever and wear mine only.

It is true also that some of Mary's mannerisms fascinated me very much; she would raise the arm with the bracelet, when she was frightened, as though to protect herself from some danger. At such times I would tease her a little and Mary would cast a pleading look, as much as to say:

"Remember your promise."

Scarcely a year—a year of great happiness—had passed before I tried to realize how far my patience and my love were going to carry me. My hopes were disappointed. I was no nearer fathoming Mary's secret. She pretended not to understand my tentatives, and when I spoke to her openly, I was no better off.

She laughed first, and then made fun of me; in the end she tortured me on the rack. It was just the same as before our marriage except that when Mary saw I was insisting, she lost patience, and said:

"You would oblige me by leaving me in peace. We agreed that you were not to worry me any more, and here you're begin-

ning again. Shall I tell you what the end will be? You'll force me to stop loving you; you'll make me hate you . . . and then it won't matter what kind of bracelet I wear. . . ."

"No," I dared to say to her. "On my word of honor, that doesn't matter now. I only ask one thing, that you will tell me the whole story and share the secret with me; and let me know who gave it to you. Is it really true, what your school friend told me, about your always wearing it at school?"

She interrupted me in a terrible voice. "Be quiet! For God's sake, be quiet! You'll kill my love. I shall hate you if you say another word. All is over between us!"

She left me stunned, as if she had struck me, and she went and shut herself in her room.

By some ill fortune I took it in my head to go out at that moment. I went to see a very intimate friend of mine. He saw my distress, and asked me the cause of it. I—like a fool—told him all, from the beginning to the end, omitting no details.

It is useless to repeat what my friend said: just the obvious things that every one would say. He told me I was a weak fool, and advised me to act like a man, to set my teeth and demand obedience without wavering; in short, to conquer at all costs. I was amazed at this advice. When I went home Mary was sleeping. The light of the night lamp flickering on the red glass, cast reflections here and there, that were like blood stains; one of them fell on Mary's face, and her arm was lying across the sheet stiff and still as death. . . . For the first time I saw that accursed bracelet shine in the red light of the lamp . . . and Mary was sleeping peacefully, without any anxiety or suspicion. The little glass bracelet did not seem to disturb her dreams. Ah, shall I ever know what her dream was! The sight of her annoyed me, hurt me, infuriated me. . . . There was a red mist before my eyes, and my heart was beating fast. . . . The idea of crime came into my head; it struck me like lightning, and once it had seized me nothing could detain. I did not count the consequences; probably I thought that if I put my idea into execution I should be delivered from all evil for ever. But was I in my right mind? Did I know what I was doing?

I went quite softly to the bedside and bent over Mary. I took hold of the serpent, by its tail with one hand and its head with

the other. All I did (how little strength is needed to commit a crime!), all I did was to draw my hands apart.

And the bracelet was broken.

I let the fragments fall on the sheets and drew away my hands. The sound of breaking glass awoke Mary. But before opening her eyes she took her other hand from under the sheet and felt, I am sure unconsciously, for the bracelet.

The bracelet was not there. . . .

She found the broken glass in pieces on the bed. . . . She opened her eyes . . . and jumped up. All this was done in the space of a flash. I saw her standing before me, barefooted, with arms bare, and the fragments in her hands. Her loose hair fell over her shoulders; but her eyes—can I ever forget them? They haunt me still, unceasingly, as I saw them at that moment. They were staring at me with the pupils in the corners; instead of being blue, they were black and sinister, flashing fury, and the white seemed to flame with a tragic wildness.

But it is impossible to attempt to describe the voice in which she said:

"You've broken it . . . you've broken it. . . . Very well, that's the end. You've broken every link between us . . . you've been selfish, stupid, curious, a liar! . . . You shall just know this. No one gave me the bracelet. There is no story attached to it . . . no mystery. I wore it for the sake of a fancy. You made a great fuss about it, and tormented me for so long. . . . Ah! I hate you, I loathe you, for what you have done. Go! may I never see you again!"

From that night I was indeed separated from my wife. After two years of an unbearable existence, we were officially separated.

She married again at Constantinople. One of my friends, who has seen her recently, told me that she always wears a certain bracelet, a coral and gold bracelet.

ROBERT

By K. ZARINS

WE lived at that time in an old half-ruined house, which had only one room. Opposite us there lived some girls who did washing, and it was said that they were visited by men, for they were remarkably pretty, and quite different from the usual washer-woman type. I used to watch them often, and I liked the look of them. They were always laughing and singing, they harmed no one, and used no bad language. Only once a pretty girl of twenty came to me, and said:

"Well, young man . . ."

She added such loathsome, shameful words that I was at a loss for an answer. I was no fool in such matters, and I understood well enough what she said, but I was amazed that such a lovely and apparently pure woman should know the language of the low haunts I knew. The incident made a great impression upon me, but rather than show my amazement, I had nothing but scornful words and disdainful looks for the girl from that time on. She took her cue from me and paid no attention to me.

When I wanted to play with any other children I had to go into the streets, or to friends' houses. I often did so, and would come home quite tired.

Although we were very poor my mother and I lived peacefully, and as I thought, without anxiety. My mother's sewing machine was by the window looking into the street, and her bed was by the window. Against the other wall was a big old-fashioned stove, behind it stood my bed, and there was another window near it.

My mother loved cleanliness above all things, so our house was neat and spotless. There were white curtains on the windows and white covers on the table and cupboards.

I liked clean things too, but it was not so obvious in my case, and my mother often scolded me on that account. Otherwise, we

got on well together and there was real affection between us. Certainly I was not demonstrative about it, but on one occasion I made up my mind to give proof of it.

At that time my mother was young and pretty, as she herself admitted. She was tall and she had dark eyes and dark hair, which, loosened, fell in lovely waves almost to her feet. We were both proud of this wealth of hair; it was one of our joys.

Most of the time my mother sat by the window sewing, and I could never make out how she found time to tidy the room or prepare meats.

It is true that I was rarely in the house during the day. I was either at Dunauffer, or about the streets with other boys.

At Dunauffer I was specially interested in the movements of vessels. I watched their arrival and departure and had my favorites to which I devoted special attention.

On one of the boats I made friends with a laborer, who was at least three times my age. Nevertheless, we were good friends.

We were both called Robert, and we had at least one taste in common. We both loved ships, and our talk generally turned on them. There was an English ship with a red hand on the funnel, and my friend assured me it was because the owner of the ship had had his hands cut off. I saw nothing strange in the story, and I fully believed it. Moreover, either of us would gladly have given his hands if he could have owned such a vessel. Thus the time passed at Dunauffer in talk about the ships, and dreams of foreign lands.

It was a sunny day and the marketplace was as usual perfectly quiet, while on board there was a wind blowing, and the laborers were annoyed by it. When it began to rain, we sheltered in Robert's cabin and made tea there.

The time passed quickly and I did not notice how late it was before setting off home. Naturally, I was blamed at home for being so late, and my mother made some unflattering remarks about my friendship with Robert. Later on, my mother got to know one of the market women with whom we went to lodge and she took my side. Still, I could not understand why I should be ashamed of having such a worthy man as a friend. However, I decided to have less to do with him.

As autumn drew nearer the weather became very wet and I had

to spend whole days in the house, whether I wanted to, or not. On such days I would sit in my little room, behind the stove, and make paper ships. There was nothing I enjoyed more than this, and I became so absorbed that I scarcely noticed how quickly the days passed.

One afternoon the rain had stopped, and my mother asked me if I was not going out. But I was making a steamer with two funnels, so I answered:

"I've no time."

"Well, then . . . go to Robert's," said my mother with a laugh.

"She's sending me to Robert's," I said to myself in surprise. Her laugh seemed rather strange, and although I did not understand, I obeyed and went out.

When I went home in the evening, I found my mother sewing as usual. She was very quiet, and I was surprised because she passed no remarks and asked no questions. Naturally, I was pleased, but my suspicions were aroused.

The next day was a Sunday and my mother was up and dressed early, because she intended to go to church. I wanted to go with her, but she told me that I had no Sunday clothes and that I must stay at home to look after the house. I agreed, and decided to guard the house as well as I could.

After preparing some food for me in case I should be hungry, my mother set off, and I was alone. I wanted to finish the boat I had begun, and I became so absorbed in the work that I did not think of my mother until late in the afternoon. It was time she came back. I was getting tired of being alone and anxious about her. The room was getting dark, and I could hear mice scratching under the floor. I left my work, and went to the window. The narrow, dingy street was deserted. As usual on Sundays there was nothing to be seen, but rather than stare at the dark walls of the room I glued my face to the window pane, and stayed in that position all evening. I was very sad, wondering why my mother was so inhumanly cruel, and I began to cry. I waited a long time, the door creaked, and my mother came in. I saw that she had been hurrying and that she was excited, but I did not notice straightway that she seemed very happy, and not at all sorry for being so late. When she saw that I

had been crying, she came to me and gave me a piece of chocolate wrapped in paper.

"Ah, you silly boy," exclaimed my mother, when she saw me looking wistfully at the chocolate. "Eat it, it's from your aunt."

"From aunt?" I said jestingly. Mother began to laugh, and she turned me round two or three times.

"Listen," I said angrily. "I don't like this kind of madness."

"Well, you are an old wiseacre," she said, rather nettled. She left me to undress, and I thought that perhaps I had really vexed her.

"Come on, let's enjoy this," I said in a friendly way, glancing at the chocolate.

Mother did not answer. She was sitting on a chair, undressing, and staring thoughtfully at the paraffin lamp. Her eyes were shining, and it was clear that she had not heard me speaking.

I had eaten the chocolate and I wanted to show the ship I had nearly finished. I had still to put ropes and sailors on it, and I wanted some thread.

Mother scarcely glanced at the ship, but she said that it was pretty.

"Can you lend me a bit of cotton?"

"Take what you want."

I went to the drawer.

"Can I have some of this gray silk?"

"Yes, take it."

I took the whole reel and put it in the ship, then we went to bed. My mother came as usual to put me to bed, and to my great astonishment, she kissed me. This she never did.

That night, neither of us could sleep. My mother was tossing for a long time in her bed, while I was reflecting about my life. Then I began to think of my mother's conduct and wonder what was going to happen. In the end, I fell asleep, worn out with useless worrying.

Some days passed without any further developments, except that my mother was unusually kind to me. I could come and go as I liked without fearing any reproach. No matter when I came back from Dunauf, my mother seemed to take no notice, and this freedom suited me excellently. Only once did my mother

ask me to stay in the house, when she went out. I wanted to go with her, but she would not hear of it. She promised to bring me some chocolate. I stayed behind and it was like the Sunday when my mother came home late. She seemed happy when she came back, but her behavior mystified me. She would often laugh and sing, and she seemed to grow younger and more care-free each day. Of course, I did not notice the change immediately, but I felt it, as it were, by intuition. One morning, I smelt scent. My mother must be using perfume. That roused me, and I felt as though it were something evil, ill-omened. It was not in my power to be indifferent to scents and perfumes; it reminded me of girls, and it was a shock to me that my mother should use scent as they did.

Days passed, and eventually my mother told me to go to my aunt's. Why, I did not know. I only know that my aunt asked me the strange question:

"Well, how are things going at home? Hasn't your mother told you anything?"

I said that she had not. Before long, I wanted to go home, but it was late, and my aunt insisted on my staying the night with her, and I had no objections to spending a little time with Marie. Moreover, there were some very lively girls at my aunt's house, and they entertained me in all sorts of ways. One of them lost a hair pin, and exclaimed.

"Another admirer lost."

Thus the evening passed, and it was not until night came on that I began to regret having left my mother alone. She might be anxious. The next day I went to our house on the banks of the Duna as soon as day dawned.

Mother was up already, and she was boiling coffee, which, generally, we drank only on Sundays. She did not scold me but asked me how I had slept.

"And how have you got on?" I asked.

"I've been thinking about my son."

"And I about you."

Mother bent and kissed me on the forehead.

"They're merry at aunt's."

"Then go and see her as often as you like," said mother.

She sat down before her work and began to sew. I took my

boat to complete it by putting on the riggings, when I glanced towards the window, and noticed on the flower pot a cigarette end! I was on the point of asking how it came to be there, but I stopped myself in time, and going to the window, took the cigarette end. It was smoked to the end, and it must have been a good brand, because it was gold tipped. How did it come to be there? Suddenly I grew hot with shame. I understood, I understood all. A man must have visited my mother; he had been smoking, and had put the end on the flower pot. There could be no doubt about it. My heart was beating fast.

"What are you doing there?" asked my mother suddenly. Maybe she had heard my heart beating.

The cigarette end dropped from my hand. I put my foot on it, and answered:

"Nothing."

I did not want to show my agitation, so I said to turn aside her suspicions:

"It's nothing. The seamen are in mutiny." I could think of nothing but the horrible discovery. My heart was heavy as though something very sad had happened.

My mother! was it possible that my mother. . . .

I was standing looking through the window. All was dark around me. I felt as though I had no mother and that I was all alone in the world.

Yet my mother was sitting calmly at her sewing. I crouched in a corner to think, and I watched her uneasily. She was working, with all her attention devoted to her work as usual. I was filled with anger, hatred and indignation; on the spur of the moment I felt as though I wanted to have no more to do with my mother. She was like a strange woman to me, hateful and impure. I was ready to throw the cigarette at her, and shout:

"Here's the cigarette belonging to the man who came to see you."

But what if it were all my imagination? Perhaps there was a misunderstanding. I thought of new possibilities, which were too grave to be passed over in silence. Full of anger, I decided to wait a few days, and I rejoiced in having leisure to brood over such a secret.

I put the cigarette end back on the flower pot, for above all,

I wanted to know whether mother would notice it, and what she would do. I spent the day in keeping a close watch on every movement of mother's. We spoke very little and we avoided one another's eyes. No one touched the cigarette end, and after watching mother all day, I went to bed. I dreamt of the washer women, of my aunt and the girls at her house, but not of my mother.

When I rose the next morning, the end was not there.

"Ah, she has thrown it away," I thought.

Mother was sitting sewing. I dressed and went out. After lunch, mother called me and gave me a little parcel to take to my aunt's.

"I don't want to go," I said.

"Go along, take it," my mother insisted. "I'll give you something if you do." Still I refused.

"I'm ashamed of showing my face so often there," I said. "People don't know what to think."

"About what?" said mother, laughing.

"Ah, you know well enough," I said angrily. My mother seemed suddenly discomfited; she turned her back to me, and began to sew feverishly, but before long, she went on:

"Be a good boy, Bobby, and take the parcel."

"I'm not at all happy about it," I said. We spent the whole afternoon thus. Mother became more and more anxious. She took up her work, and laid it down again. With my head bent, I watched her; she was always looking at the time, and she seemed very excited. I hated her and despised her, as I would my worst enemy. I took pleasure in watching her distress and restlessness. It was on the tip of my tongue to say:

"You think I don't know anything but I know all. . . ."

This did not last long. My mother dressed, evidently with the intention of going out. I did not like the idea of her going, and my conviction began to waver. Perhaps the story about the parcel was genuine. I took the parcel and decided I should never come back.

My aunt treated me kindly but what she said later made me flush with shame.

"You'll be having a new father soon, I expect."

The girls began to laugh, and wish me good luck. Marie

asked me what my new father was like. I could scarcely keep back tears of shame and indignation.

"That will never come about," I cried out involuntarily.

"Why don't you want a new father?" began my aunt.

I could stand no more of it, and I rushed into the street, sobbing. Tears choked me, and I wondered how men could be so wicked. I was in the town, and it seemed to be very full of life; there were pretty things in the shops, but nothing attracted me.

I stayed for a long time in the dingy streets, and several times passed the Johannhof. It was getting dark, and I had to look for a shelter for the night. Where could I go? Not to my aunt's house, whatever happened. I made my way mechanically to the house on the other side of the Duna.

Mother received me and asked:

"How did you get on there?"

I did not answer, but went straight to bed. I was scarcely there, when I thought I smelt a cigarette.

"Some one's been here," I exclaimed. My mother was silent, and I thought she had stopped breathing. The room was so still that I could hear the kettle singing, and it seemed to make a great noise amid the silence.

"Come and have dinner," said mother before long.

I hesitated, and then said:

"I don't want any dinner to-day."

Mother did not answer or show any sign of anger. She prepared to go to bed. I could not see her, but I could hear her. One of her hairpins jumped out to me.

"Another admirer lost," I thought and became calmer.

Neither of us could sleep that night. Mother's breathing was as quiet as a mouse's. I was struggling among confused dreams.

At midnight, mother rose, and came to my bed. In the light of the street lamps, I could see her anguished face, and her dark hair falling to the ground. She bent towards me as though to kiss me, but she did not, and covered me.

"Leave me alone," I said suddenly. "I know all and you're not my mother any more." She drew towards the door, her hand on her heart.

"What do you know?" she said, her eyes big with fright.

"Don't try to deceive me," I said. "Every one's talking about it."

Mother did not ask me what every one was talking about. She seemed to be waiting for me to go on.

"I'm going to have another father," I exclaimed, with a bitter laugh, and I could not stop myself crying. Mother tried to calm me; she stood waiting until I should stop crying. Then she said:

"Well, what difference does that make? We shall be better off after."

"Don't be absurd," I exclaimed furiously. "Listen, you're a miserable girl."

This was rather brutal. Mother sank down and stared at me, stupefied. Her eyes were dilated, and I was afraid.

"And if a man were to come," I thought.

At last mother rose and went to her part of the room.

There was silence for a moment. I heard moans. It was my mother. It seemed as though she were trying to stifle them in the pillows. I thought, too, that she was wringing her hands until her fingers cracked. I felt very pitiful. I rose and went to her. She was lying with her head buried in the pillows. I put my hand on her shoulder, and said quietly:

"Well, what's the matter?"

Mother did not turn round nor stop crying. In the end, she uttered a cry and grew calmer. I was standing, thinking. I was more and more grieved about mother, then I began to talk, and I said it would be better if nothing were changed.

I became calmer, and went nearer mother. She seemed to be listening, and I promised that I would be good, better than I had been.

"I love you very much," I said, and I kissed her.

Mother turned, without a word; she kissed me on the forehead, and held me for a long time in her arms. My heart was light when I went to sleep rocked by my mother.

We never spoke again of what passed between us, and no man ever came again to our house.

Mother became more and more earnest and she never went out again.

ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

This address list does not aim to be complete, but it is based simply on the magazines which I have consulted for this volume, and which have not ceased publication.

Belgium

Annales, Prince de Ligue, 118 Avenue de Visé, Brussels.
Aurore, 6 Rue de Lombardie, Brussels.
Bataille Littéraire, 40 Rue des Glaieuls, Uccle, Brussels.
Clairon Hardy, 49 Avenue Albert, Brussels.
Defense Wallonne, 5 Rue de l'Amazone, Ixelles, Brussels.
Disque Vert, 75 Rue des Garennes Boitsfort, Brussels.
Femme Belge, 75 Boulevard Clovis, Brussels.
Flambeau, 213 Rue de la Poste, Brussels.
Horizon, 8 Rue de Berlaimont, Brussels.
Ons Volk Ontwaakt, 127 Boul. Emile Jacqmain, Brussels.
Progres, 31 Rue des Ailes, Brussels.
Renaissance d'Occident, 95 Rue Berckmans, Brussels.
Revue d'Actions et Impressions, 33 Rue d'Albanie, Brussels.
Revue Generale, 21 Rue de la Limite, Brussels.
Source, 6 Rue du Japon, Uccle-Brussels.
Thyrse, 104 Avenue Montjoie, Uccle-Brussels.

Bulgaria

Democraticheski Pregled, Sofia.
Listopad, Sofia.
Mosaique des romans contemporains, Sofia.
Oustrina, Sofia.
Slntze, Sofia.
Svobodno Mnemie, Sofia.
Zlatorog, Sofia.

Czecho-Slovakia

Cesky Svet, Karlin, Kralovska, 46, Prague.
Cesta, Marianska, 3, Prague.
Dilo, U Vejvodu, Prague, I.
Host, Socharska, 334, Prague.
Lumir, Karlovo Nam, Prague.
Moderni Revue, Prague.
Pasma, Brno.
Sever a Vychod, Turnov.
Slovenské Pohľady, Turcansky sv. Martin.
Stestena, Kralovska trida, 66, Prague-Smichov.
Topicuv Sbornik, Narodni trida, 11, Prague.

310 MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

Zemé, Ticha, 9, Prague-Smichov.
Zensky Svet, Marianska Ul. 3, Prague.
Zlata Praha, Karlovo Nemesti, Prague.
Zvon, Vysehrad, Prague.

Denmark

Den Nye Revue, Skindergade 8, Copenhagen.
Den Nye Tid, Grønnegade 29, Copenhagen.
Det Nye Nord, Peder Skramsgade 19, Copenhagen.
Gads Danske Magasin, Vimmelskraftet 32, Copenhagen.
Illustreret Tidende, Kronprinsessegade 28, Copenhagen.
Litteraturen, Vimmelskraftet 42A, Copenhagen.
Novelle-Magasinet-Studiestraede 34, Copenhagen.
Nye Tider, Rømersgade 17, Copenhagen.
Revue, Skindergade 8, Copenhagen.
Skaninavist, Tidsskrift Risgengade 21, Copenhagen.
Tiskueren, Klareboderne 3, Copenhagen.
Virt Maanedblad, Nørrebrogade 92B, Copenhagen.

Estonia

Magazines

1. Agu. Tallinna, Pikk t. 2.
2. Kodu. Tallinna, Lai t. 38.
3. Looming. Tartu, Noor-Eesti Kirjastus.
4. Odamees. Tartu, Promenaad 7-a.
5. Sädemed. Tartu "Sädemed."

Publishers

1. Tallinna Eesti kirjastuse Ühisus, Tallinn (Reval).
2. Varrak, Tallinn (Reval), Suur Tatari tän. 1.
3. Rahvaülikool, Tallinn (Reval).
4. Noor-Eesti, Tartu, Rüütli, tän. 4.
5. Odamees, Tartu, Promenaadi tän.
6. Postimees, Tartu, Jaani tän., 11-13.

Finland

Allas Kronika, Helsinki.
Finsk Tidskrift, Helsinki.
Kotiliesi, Helsinki.
Maaailma, Hameenlinna.
Nya Argus, Helsinki.
Otavainen, Helsinki.
Panu, Porvoo.
Suomen Kuvalehti, Helsinki.
Valvoja Aika, Helsinki.
Vära Kvinnor, Helsinki.

Germany

Allgemeine Rundschau, Munich.
Berliner Leben, Berlin.
Die Dame, Berlin.
Deutsche Rundschau, Berlin.
Dresdener Rundschau, Dresden.
Dresdener Bürgerzeitung, Dresden.

Die Gartenlaube, Munich.
 Der Herr, Berlin.
 Der Jungeselle, Nollendorfplatz, Berlin.
 Das Leben, Berlin.
 Modenschrift fuer die Elegante Welt, Berlin.
 Preussische Jahrbucher, Berlin.
 Reigen, Berlin.
 Die Novelle, Berlin.
 Sport-Leben, Berlin.
 Suddeutsche Monatshefte, Munich.
 Die Woche.

Greece

Argo, rue de Stamboul 13, Alexandria, Egypt.
 Avghi, Lemissos; Cyprus.
 Diennoisi, 14 rue Gambetta, Athens.
 Erotokritos, Herakleion, Crete.
 Hesperon, Lyra.
 Kerkyraiki Anthologia, Corfu.
 Lesbiakes Selides, Mytilene.
 Moussa, Athens.
 Les Muses, Zante.
 Nea Skepsi, 89 r. Charilaou, Trikupi.
 Nea Zoe, rue de Stamboul 13, Alexandria.
 Pharos, 30 rue Sidi Mitwell, Alexandria.
 Philiki Notairis, 2 rue Dinocrate, Athens.
 Philologika Tetradia, 73 Stea Stoa Phexi, Athens.

Holland

Amsterdammer Weekblad, Kaisergracht 333, Amsterdam.
 Beiaard.
 Buiten, Amsterdam.
 Diersche Warrande
 Eigen Haard.
 Elsevier's Maandschrift, Amsterdam.
 Getij.
 Gids (P. N. K. Kampen & Zoon, Amsterdam).
 Groot Nederland.
 Gulden Winckel, Hollandia Drukkerij, Baarn.
 Kroniek.
 Leven en Werken.
 Mork's Mazijn.
 Nederland, Damrak 88, Amsterdam.
 Nieuwe Gids, s'Gravenhage.
 Onze Eeuw, De Erven F. Bohn, Haarlem.
 Ons Eigen Tijdschrift.
 Op de Hoogte, Klohwuisplein 5, Haarlem.
 Opgang.
 Socialistische Gids, Amsterdam.
 Stem, Arnhem.
 Stemmen des Tijds, Amsterdam.
 Vlaamsche Arbeid, Haarlem.

312 MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

Hungary

Budapesti Szemle, Egyetem Utca 4, Budapest.

Uj Idok, Budapest.

Napkelet, Dobrekner Utca 12, Budapest.

Nyugat, Budapest.

Wok, Andrassy Utca 10, Budapest.

Italy

Il Concilio, F. Foligno.

Il Convegno, 7 Via Borgospesso, Milan.

L'Esame, 14 Via del Monte Napelone, Milan.

Firme Nuove, Via le San Michele del Carso, 96, Milan.

Grande Firme, Via Giacomo Bove, 2, Turin.

La Lettura, 28 Via Solferino, Milan.

Noi e il Mondo, 37 Via Milano, Rome.

Novella, 19 Corsa Porta Nuova, Milan.

Novella d'Autore, 19 Via Kramer, Milan.

Nuova Antologia, Piazza di Spagna, Rome.

Rivista d'Italia, 12 Via Palestro, Milan.

La Ronda, Rome.

Il Secolo, XX, 19 Corsa Porta Nuova, Milan.

Jugoslavia

Llublyanski Zvon, Llublyana.

Dom in Svet, Llublyana.

Missao, Sima Pandourovitch, Belgrade.

Serbskiy Knyzenni Glasnik, Belgrade.

Raskasnitsa, Belgrade.

Latvia

Izglitibas Ministrijas Menesrakst, Riga.

Kulturas Vestnesis, Riga.

Latvijas Gramatrupnieks, Riga.

Latvijas Saule, Riga.

Latviju Gramata, Riga.

Muzikas Nedela, Riga.

Nakotnes Sieviete, Riga.

Ritums, Riga.

Skaidriba, Riga.

Teatra Vestnesis, Riga.

Poland

Naokolo Swiat, Warsaw.

Pani, Warsaw.

Przegląd Warszawski, Warsaw.

Przegląd Wspolczesny, Cracow.

Romans i Powiesc, Warsaw.

Straz nad Wisla, Warsaw.

Swiat, Warsaw.

Tygodnik Ilustrowany, Warsaw.

Wiadomosci Literackie, Warsaw.

Portugal

ABC.

Diario de Noticias Ilustrado.

Ilustracao Portuguesa.

Lusitania.

Occidente, 4 Travessa do Conuento do Jesus, Lisbonne.

Revista Portuguesa, 74, Rua Nova do Amalda, Lisbonne.

Rumania

Cele Trei Crisuri, Aradea Mare.

Cugetul Romaneseo, Bucharest.

Cultura, Cluj.

Flacara, Bucharest.

Gandirea, Bucharest.

Grai Si Suflet, Bucharest.

Junimea Literera, Cernauti.

Ramuri-Drum Drept, Craiova.

Tara Noastra, Cluj.

Viata Romaneasca, Jassy.

Russia

Bal Leonidowa Bartacheff, Harbin.

Bambouk Mamandi, Harbin.

Besseda Epoha, Berlin.

Dal, Tornochovskaia, Harbin.

Dalne Vostochniy Ogonick Dvorjetskiy, Harbin.

Gar Ptitsa Rousskoye Iskousto, Paris, Berlin.

Goloss Emigranta Beyllenson, Berlin.

Gredouchaia Rossia, Paris.

Jili Bili Voevodin, Bizerta, Tunis.

Jivoe Slovo S. Pelikanoff, Warsaw.

Journal Rousskago Vratsha, A. Nibourg, Berlin.

Karpatskiy Kraiu Av. Popoff, Moutkaiychovo.

Loutskiy Loutckaia Rousskaia, Gimnasia, Loutck.

Maiak Pg. Roubnessoff, Riga.

Molodaia Rossia Rousskoe St. O. Osch, Berlin.

Niva Maria Zvezdil, Shanghai.

Novosti Literatouri Grani, Berlin.

Okno, Harbin.

Rousskaia Kniga Kritiki Iaschenko, Berlin.

Vera I Jizn Bouketoff, New York.

Vesch Ckifi, Berlin.

Vessiol'y Obitalat, Harbin.

Voshod Lenine, Berlin.

Voskressenie, Paris.

Zveno, Vassillieff, Paris.

Volo Rossia, Paris.

Russia (Soviet)

Krasnaia Nov, Maroseika, B. Ouspenski, 5 Moscow.

Lef, Nikitski Bd. 8, Moscow.

Zvesda, Leninegrad.

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Spain

Blanco y Negro, Madrid.
Revista del Mundo, Madrid.
Revista del Oro, Barcelona.

Turkey

Dorghiah, Stamboul.
Duchundje, Stamboul.
Idjtihad, Stamboul.
Yarine, Stamboul.
Yeni-Indji, Stamboul.
Yeni-Nesi, Stamboul.

BIOGRAPHICAL ROLL OF HONOR OF CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES

Armenia

AHARONIAN, A. In the Shadow of Death.

Belgium

PICARD, EDMOND. Scenes Juridiques (The Juryman), etc.

Bulgaria

GABE, DORA. Born in the Dobrudja. Has achieved great success in depicting the life of the peasants in the Dobrudja and their customs.

KARABYITCHEFF, ANGUEL. He is one of the youngest of the Bulgarian prose writers. He is only twenty-three. Born in a village near Lerino, the old capital of Bulgaria. By profession a chemist, Karabyitcheff analyzes successfully the souls of men. He published his first poems in various Bulgarian reviews and then short stories, including The Stone Bridge of the Rossitza, and The Eagles, which won for him last year a prize of 10,000 frs. from the Bulgarian Ministry of Education.

Czechoslovakia

CAPEK-CHOD, K. M. Born in Domazlice in 1860. The great realist. Antonin Vondrejč, Turbin, Kaspar-Len-Vengeur.

CAPEK, JOSEF. Brother of K. Capek. Author, Lelio, Pro Delfina.

DYK, VICTOR. Born in Sopka near Melnik in 1877. Deputy and editor of the magazine Lumir. Author, Konec Hackenschniduv.

HOLECEK, JOSEPH. Born in Stozice in 1853. The great writer of rural life. Nasi.

MAJEROVA, MARIA. The Golden Autumn. Born in Prague, 1898. One of the best of the younger school.

SRAMEK, FRANA. Born in Prague in 1877. Representative of the younger generation. The Flesh, The Silver Wind.

Denmark

RODE, EDITH. The wife of the poet Helge Rode. She has just celebrated her twenty-fifth anniversary as a Danish writer. Author: 1926: Kvinde, Hertes Baby, Hjerter.

Esthonia

ADAMSON, HENDRIK. Writer of prose and poetry. Born in 1891. Published in 1926 a volume of short stories, Roheline Sisalik (The Green Lizard).

KIVIKAS, ALBERT. Suree vee Ajal.

RHOT, RICHARD. Born in 1891. Novelist and short story writer. Published in 1925 the novel Uksindus (Solitude) and the book of short stories, Neli Juttu (4 Short Stories). Vilme Kevad.

TAMMSAARV, A. H. Viil, Naistevorgutaja, Poialpoiss.

TUGLAS, FRIEDBERT. Writer and critic. Born in 1886. The director of the most important Esthonian literary magazine, Looming (Creation). The greatest Esthonian short story writer. Poet ja Idoot, Popi i Huhnu, The Horror in the Forest. Has published six volumes of short stories. In 1925, Hingede randamine (Metamorphoses).

WILDE, EDWARD. Born in 1865. The most fertile of the Esthonian writers. Spent 12 years abroad as a refugee, mostly in the United States. Has published a trilogy based on Esthonian history, as well as numerous plays. In 1925, on the occasion of his 69th birthday, he wrote the short story, Asunik Wolterhausen (The Colonist Wolterhausen).

Finland

HAANPAA, PENTTI. Born in 1905. Won the Finnish literary prize with his short story, Maantieta Pitkin.

HAARLA, LAURI. Born in 1890. Author: Saaretun Nakyja, Sophonisba, Onni Maallinin, Hanuumanin tytär, Lemmin Polka, Synti, Uskottomuus, Nuorten Tuomio.

JOTUNI, MARIA. Born in 1880. Author: Suhteita, Rakkauttan, Kun on tun teet, Arkielamaa, Martinin Rikos, Vanha Koti, Miehen Kylkiluu, Savu-Uhri, Kultainen Vasikka.

LEHTONEN, JOEL. Born in 1881. Author: Paholaisen Viulu, Matalena, Villi, Myrtti Ja Alppiruusu, Punainen Mylly, Kerran Kesalla, Kuolleet Omenapuut, Putkinotko, Rakastunut Rampa, Korpi Ja Puutarhan Sorron Lapset, Onnen Poika, Markkinoilta, Puolikuum Alla.

SILLANPAA, F. E. Born in 1889. Author, Enkelten Suojatit, Tollinmaki, Selma Koljas.

Germany

MANN, KLAUS. The son of Thomas Mann. Enjoyed great success with first book of short stories entitled "Vor dem Leben." An ultra modernist.

PONTEN, JOSEF. Considered one of the greatest modern German short story writers. Die Uhr von Gold, Der Meister, Die Insel, Die Bockreiter.

THIESS, FRANK. Author, Die Verdammten, Das Gesicht des Jahrhunderts, Angelika Ten Swaart, Der Tod von Falern, Der Leibhaftige, Der Kampf mit dem Engel.

Greece

XENOPOULOU, GREGOIRE. He was born at Constantinople in 1867, but he spent his childhood at Zantiote, the native isle of his parents. Gregoire Xenopoulo is a very prolific writer, who has won equal success in all branches of literature. His best-known novels are The Red Rock, Photine Sandré, The Woman with Three Appearances, Isabella, Stella Violenti, The Evil Way, Therese Varmadacosta. He has drawn most of his dramas from his novels, and he has written a great number of short stories and sketches, which have been published in periodicals and newspapers at Athens.

Holland

HOPMAN, FRITZ. Born in Amsterdam, July 14, 1877. Studied in London and later in Amsterdam and Groningen. In 1910 he became attached to the staff of the *Arnhemsche Courant*. In 1912 he returned to London and in 1914 became professor of English at the University of Leyden. Author of, *In Het Voorbijgaan*, *De Preeftijd*, *Van de Liefde die Vrij weu zijn*, *Nachtnaken*, *The Bearer of the Message*.

Hungary

BABETI, MIHALY (MICHAEL). Born in 1883. Became famous about the same time as Ady whom he joined in the leadership of the *Nyugat*, the celebrated post-war Hungarian review. At first he devoted himself entirely to poetry, when he revealed to the public the great artist and dreamer he was; furthermore being a scholar he has a sound knowledge of the habits and general trend of thought of the different cliques in Hungary. His style changed after the war, his accent becoming more human, his lyrics more heartrending and his expressions stronger. Besides his own works he has translated Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Verlaine and others. The following are a few outstanding titles: *The Leaves of Iris's Crown*, *The Vale of Unrest*, *The Calif of the Storks*, *The Christmas Madonna*, *Virgil Timai's Son*, *The Castle of Cards*, *Stories and Novels*.

DE BARTOKY, JOSEF. Born in Bekscsaba in 1865. In 1918, under-secretary of Agriculture. Author, *Oszi Istek* (Winter Evenings), *Telben* (In Winter), *Mecsvilag* (The Light of a Candle), *Szivervany* (The Rainbow).

HERCZEG, FERENCZ. Born in 1863 at Versecz. The greatest living Hungarian author. Author, *Fenn es Lent* (Up and Down), *Poganyok* (The Pagans), *Ocskay Brigaderos* (Brigadier Ocskay), *Az elet Kapuja* (The Door of Life).

KOSZTOLANYI, DESIRE. Born in 1885 at Subottiza (Szabadka) on the Serbo-Hungarian frontier. The representative of the impressionist movement. Author, *A szegeny kis gyermek panasza* (Complaints of a Poor Little Boy), *Negy fal kozett* (Between Four Walls), *Magia* (Magi), *Kenyer es bor* (Bread and Wine), *Bolondok* (The Lunatics), *Bela az egyugyu* (Bela the Fool).

DE PEKAR, JULIUS. Born in Debrecen in 1867. A prisoner during the Communist revolution. The president of the *Fehér Haz* (the anti-bolshevist society). Author of more than 65 books. *Akom the Eternal*.

ZOLTAN, AMBRUS. Born in Debrecen in 1861. The great disciple of French literature in Hungary. *Autumn's Sun*.

India

GUPTA, BIJAY SEN. *The Betel Seller*.

Italy

FERIOLI, GIUSEPPINA. *The Shark*.

HAYDEE (Ida Finzi). Born in Triestin in 1884. Author, *Racconti di Natale*, *Gli Amici de Lucia*, *Paolo Landi*, *Vita Triestina*, *Le Quasi Artisti*.

PANZINI, ALFREDO. Author, *Piccole Storie del Mondo Grande*, La Lanterna di Diogene, *Le Flabe della Virtù*, III, 1859; *Santippe*, *La Madonna di Mama*, *Viaggio di un Povero Letterato*, *Io Cerco Moglie*, *Il Monde e rotondo*, *Donne*, *Madonne*, e *Bimbi*, *Le Dami-gelle*, *Novelle d'Ambo i Sessi*.

Jugoslavia

BOJOVITCH, GREGORY. Zlaté of Slatina.

Latvia

AKURATERS, JANIS. Born in 1876. He has made his mark in Lettish literature as a novelist as well as a lyrical poet and a dramatist. For his dramas he seeks his stuff largely in ancient Lettish lore and has dramatized the old Lettish and Livland heroes Viesturs, Kaupo. . . . His latest collection of short stories is called *Erosa ciltis* (Eros), from which the tale *Death* is chosen.

BRIGADER, ANNA. Born in 1869. In 1922 she celebrated the jubilee of her literary activity and was made the recipient of many tokens of popular favor, notably of an estate named "Spriditis," after the name of the hero of her best-known play. While she has written novels and verse of considerable merit her chief reputation rests on her dramatic works: *Ilga*. *Heteras mantojums*. *Spriditis* (fairy tale). In her *Dzelzs dure* (The Iron Fist) she gives some remarkable descriptions of conditions in Riga in 1918-19, during the German occupation. Author, *The Night Journey*.

ZARINS, K. Robert. Considered the best short story by the Lettish Literary Committee.

Norway

FALKBERGET, JOHAN. A Disastrous Springtime.

Poland

GRUBINSKI, WACLAW (pseudonyme *Przeboj i wa*). Born 23 December at Warsaw: *Na Rubiezy* 1906, *Pocalunek* 1906, *Uczta Bal-tazara* 1906, *Pijani* 1907, *Bunt* 1909, *Moc Kamienna* 1911, *O klat-wie Wyspianskiego* 1912, *Kochankowie* 1915, *Djogenesz Synopy i Aleksander Wiel ki albo slawienie prozniactxa* 1915, *Piekna Helena* 1919, *Niewierna* 1919, *Baj-baju-baj* 1920, *Zabawa* 1921, *Lenin* 1921, *Baal* 1926.

MAKUSZYNSKI, KORNEL. Born in 1822 in Stryj, near the Carpathian Mountains, studied in the high school of Lwow and in the uni-versity of Lwow. Author of many short stories, literary sketches and some novels. The most known short stories: *Gay Things* (*Rzeczy wesole*). *Pearls and Swine* (*Perly i wieprze*). *The Game of Happiness* (*Zabawa w szczescie*). *Arabian Adventures* (*Awan-tury arabskie*).

ZEROMSKI, STEFAN (pseudonyme *Zych Maurycy*, *Katerla J.*) Born 14 November 1864 at Strawczynie. *Rozdziobia nas kruki i wrony* 1895, *Opo Wiadania* 1896, *Szyzyfowe prace* 1898, *Utwory powies-ciowe* 1899, *Ludzie bezdomni* 1900, *Aryman msci sie* 1904, *Popioly* 1904, *Powiesc o udalym Walgierzu* 1906, *Echa lesne* 1905, *Duma o hetmanie* 1908, *Slowo o bandosie* 1908, *Dzieje grzechu* 1906, *Roza* 1909, *Promien Uroda zycia* 1911, *Wierna rzeka* 1913, *Sen o Szpad-zie* 1911, *Sen o szpadzie i sen o chlebie* 1916, *Inter arma* 1920, *Biala re Kawiczka* 1921, *Wiatr od Morza* 1922.

Portugal

BASTIO, CLAUDIO. Born in Lisbon in 1891. *Ironia galante*, *A Linguagem de Fialho*, *Uma Explicação*, *Tres Cartas de Camilo*, *Flores do Frio* (*A Outra*).

Rumania

AGARBICEANU. Transylvanian priest and patriot. *Archangelii. Tefelega. Zidele din urma a Capit. Parvu. Trasurica verde. In intuneric.*

ALDEA, SANDU. *Innurmaplugului. Pe drumul Baraganului. Pe Margineanca.*

BRATESCO-VOINESTI, J. A. Born in 1869. Magistrate, then advocate. *In lumed dreptatei. Intuneric si lumina. Sorana. In slujba Pacei. The Violoncello.*

JORGA, N. Born in 1871 at Botosani. Master at Bucharest University, and the Sorbonne (Paris), member of the Rumanian Académie, and correspondent for the Institut de France, historian. *History of the Byzantine Empire* (in English). *History of Rumanian Literature* (in Rumanian). *History of the Rumanian People* (in Rumanian). *Contes Roumains* (in French). *L'Art Roumain* (in French). *La Roumanie Pitoresque* (in French). *Histoires des Croisades* (in French).

MARIE, QUEEN OF RUMANIA. *Tara mea* (*My Country*). *Canduri si icoane din vremea rasboiului. Dal Mio Cuore al loro Cuore.*

SADOVEANU, M. Born at Falticeni. Director of the National Theatre. *Jassy. Somii. Neamul Soimarestilor. In delta. La Noi in viisoara. Cantecul amintirii. Pildele lui C. Vichentie. Lacrimile Ieromonahului Veniamin. Oameni si Locuri.*

Russia

KUPRINE, ALEXANDER. Born in 1870 in Narovtchak, Penza. When quite young, he was sent to military school and in 1890 became a second lieutenant in a Dnieper regiment. He gave up the military life four years later, to devote himself to writing. His carefulness and exactitude reminds one of the old Flemish and Dutch painters. The greatest of the Russian emigré writers. Author, *The Duel, My First Born, The Ditch, The Bog, The Song of the Cricket, In the Heart of the Woods, Olessia, The Telegraphist, Moloch, Captain Rybnikov, A Coward, The Jewess, The Wedding, The Shulamite, Measles, Thunder, etc.*

Soviet Russia

BABEL, T. *The Story of My Dovecot.* Babel is one of the best of the new school of writers in Bolshevik Russia.

Spain

MENGOTTI, ENRIQUE. Born in 1898 in Madrid, he is considered one of the most characteristic short story writers.

Sweden

SIWERTZ PER SIGFRID. Born in Stockholm the 24th of January, 1882: graduated at the Upsal University, then devoted his whole time to literary work. His first efforts, poems, are greatly appreciated

in Sweden for the minute accuracy of the descriptions and the well-chosen expressions. Leaving poetry aside Siwertz gave his attention to novel writing, which is to this day his usual mode of expression. *Margot*, 1906, the first of a series of short stories, depicting town life: *The Circle*, *The Brothers of Lake Maelar*, 1908; *The Old Folk*, 1909; *The Pirate of Maelar*, 3rd edition, 1911; *A Loafer*, 4th edition, 1914; *Grown-up Children*, 1915, are among his most valuable works.

Switzerland

GIRARD, PIERRE. He is a native of Geneva but like many of his compatriots, likewise writers of talent, has spent the greater part of his life in Paris. *The Extraordinary Metamorphosis of John*.

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"L'Argent" (Revue "Zlatorog,"
1926). | VLADIMIR POLIANOFF. [1925].
"Sur le Pont" (Revue "Zlatorog,"
ANGHEL KARALYITCHEFF.
"Pater Noster" (Ibid., 1925).
"Le Pont de Pierre de la Ros-
sitza" (Ibid., 1925). |
| NICOLAS RAINOFF.
"Le Pauvre Lazare" (Ibid.,
1926). | |

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| AMFITEATROV, ALEKSANDR VALEN-
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| ANDRLIK, FRANTISEK JOSEF.
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- FLOS, FRANTISEK.
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- HERITES, FRANTISEK.
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- LOTKOVÁ, Z., TIMKO, A. E.
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- SEDEMNAST.
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